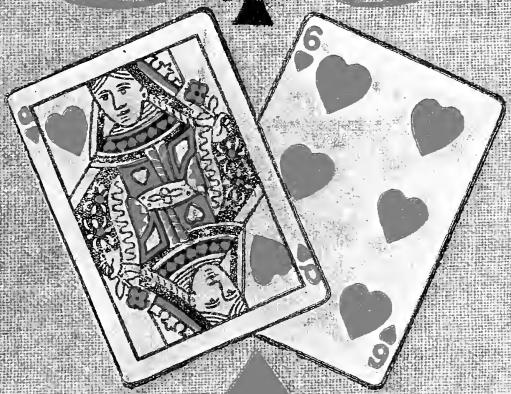
Short-Suit Whist



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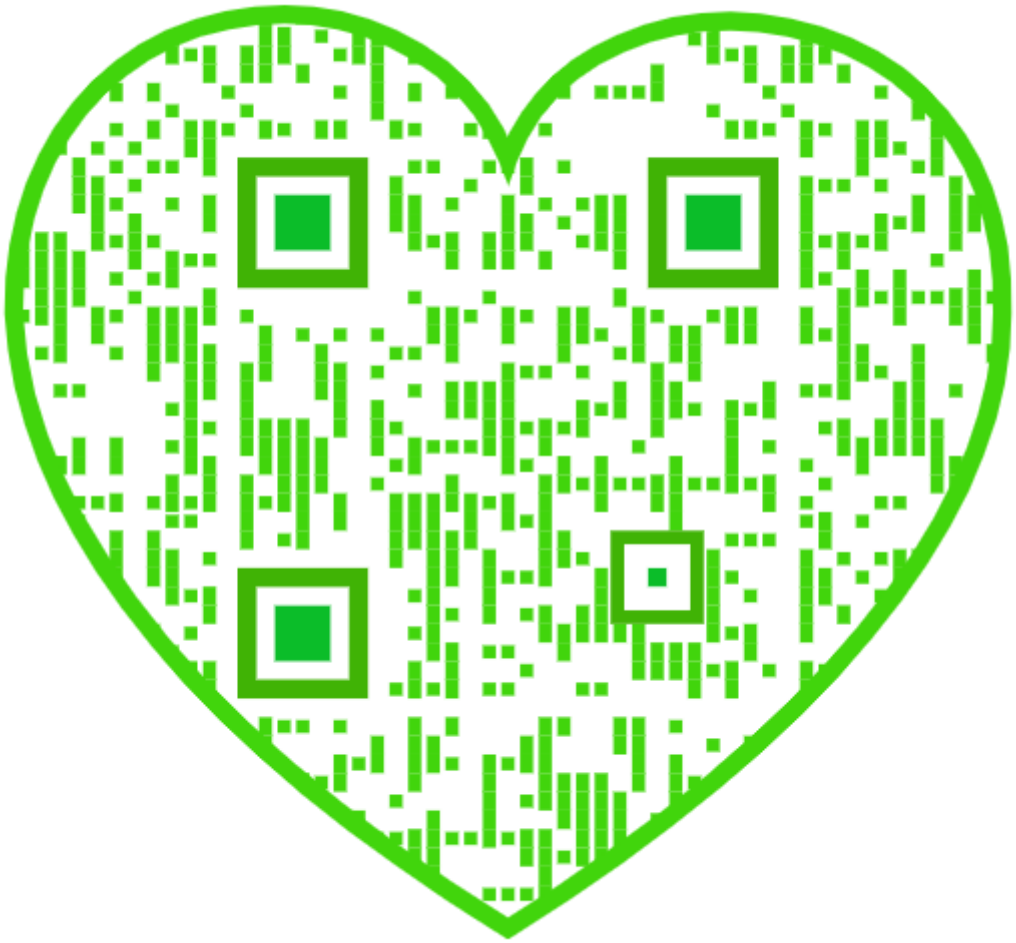

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SHORT-SUIT WHIST

BY

VAL. W. STARNES

"Individually, every card is more valuable when led up to than when led"

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BRENTANO'S

NEW YORK CHICAGO WASHINGTON

1896

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BY

BRENTANO'S.

TO

R. F. FOSTER,

WHOSE WRITINGS ON WHIST

HAVE ENCOURAGED AND MATERIALLY ASSISTED

THE AUTHOR,

THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

IT it is sincerely hoped that the whist-reading public will receive the following pages in the spirit in which they were written. Merely to add another work to the literature of the game was not the author's purpose in preparing them. Nor was he actuated by any groundless antagonism to established methods as a whole, since the scheme of play recommended is only intended to supplement, and not to supplant. This book is simply the natural outcome of a strong conviction of the theoretical soundness of Short-Suit Whist; the author's faith in short-suit doctrines having prompted him to reduce the leading principles to a definite system, so that their practical efficacy might be put to the test.

The author found nothing but pleasure in the writing. He will be content if the student derives an equal amount of profit from the reading.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Nowhere, perhaps, is there record of any one game of cards having taken such a hold upon public fancy as Duplicate whist has in America. There was a time, it is true, a century and a half ago, when the playing of Quadrille constituted the serious business, and the making of wars and treaties the lighter occupation of the European courts. But quadrille was limited to the nobility, and I doubt if the game was even known among the middle classes. Duplicate whist, however, has more than doubled the field of fascination, and during the past few years, in which this form of the game has become the rage, it has permeated all circles of society, the Four Hundred and the Four Million alike; and all sections of the country, from Maine to Matamoras, and from St. Augustine to Seattle. Within our national borders at least, it holds the boards, metaphorically and literally, and one must play it or fail repeatedly in responding to the demands of social intercourse.

That extremes are to be avoided in everything is a

platitude as ancient as the first copy book ; but when partaken of in moderation, Duplicate whist offers a pleasant relaxation from the toils and frets of the day, and the American people need not be in the least ashamed of its present universal prevalence. On the contrary, we should rather congratulate ourselves upon having established an intellectual pastime from which the element of chance has been greatly eliminated ; a game attractive for itself alone ; its reward the satisfaction of winning a skilfully conducted contest, and not, as is the case with the shilling points of our English cousins and of our own progressive euchre parties, the more or less substantial returns of the gaming-table.

But it is not my purpose to enter into an argument in defense of whist, a service that the game does not require from any champion. Their majesties of Hearts, Clubs, Spades, and Diamonds have too many staunch adherents throughout the land to render such pleading necessary; and even if it were, the duty would fall more fitly on some one of the numerous contemporaneous writers whose pens have dealt so ably and exhaustively with all the elements of the subject—save one. It is the object of this work to call attention to that one, which has been granted such scant consideration by others.

The whist-players of America may be divided into three classes : The first is limited to the expert old-stagers and champions of the clubs, who are too thoroughly posted to need any teaching. The second, likewise small, is composed of those who regard the

game simply as an adjunct to their social duties, and who do not care about being taught at all. The third embraces the large mass of moderate players, and those who really wish to learn ; the result of the desire being that such of them as are "natural-born whist-players" soon become worthy of a place in the first-class. But natural-born whist-players are few ; to the majority there eventually comes a time when the summit of their proficiency is reached, and they find themselves, though with the best intentions in the world, sitting down to the table each evening to play no better than they did a week before. It is chiefly for these that the following pages have been compiled, and if the suggestions they contain will enable a few of the number to win, instead of losing, an occasional game, the author will feel that he has not labored in vain.

But the reader will naturally wish to know how, otherwise than by becoming an all-round fine whist-player one may attain to this end.

I simply answer ; by playing the Short-Suit Game.

It is customary with most writers on whist merely to touch upon the original lead from a short suit ; a lead which they regard as being resorted to only under compulsion, as is evidenced by their classification of it as "forced." To take it as an initial step, and to evolve from it a regular scheme of play that can be set down in black and white, seems never to have occurred to them. That they leave for the master players, each after his own fashion, to do for himself.

But I can see no reason for conceding such a prerog-

ative to the experts alone, nor why some one should not undertake for the short-suit game what so many have done for the long; that is, to disintegrate and analyze its requirements, and to build up therefrom a connected system of play that is to some extent amenable to rules, so that even an average player, without any excessive expenditure of time and study, could gather enough of its principles to warrant him in attempting to play it.

Briefly to carry out this purpose is the writer's aim.

Before the advent of "Cavendish" and Pole it was the custom of all writers on whist to lay great stress on the value of tenace suits, and to insist that such suits should not be led from originally, and that suits that became tenaces should be discontinued. They also paid great attention to ruffing, and freely recommended the leads of singletons and two-card suits. Mathews, Major A, Admiral Burney, Cam, and Cælebs all recommended leading strengthening cards, and warned the player against attempting to establish long suits with weak hands. But during the past thirty years all writers on whist, with the exception of "Pembridge" and Foster, have advocated the long-suit game to the exclusion of all other forms of strategy. Proctor, Clay, Drayson, "Cavendish," G. W. P., Ames, Hamilton, Coffin, Work, and Street have based their theories entirely upon those of Dr. Pole, and have insisted that the original lead, except under abnormal or "forced" circumstances, must always be from the longest-strong-

est suit. This doctrine has been so widely spread by writers, and so exclusively followed by teachers that the ordinary player never dreams of following any other system. With him the play of the long suit is synonymous with playing whist.

In the face of such weighty and almost unanimous authority in favor of the long-suit game, it is venturing upon a bold assertion for anyone to deny the advisability of this orthodox opening. Its general adoption is perhaps the strongest argument in its favor. When called upon, as many of us frequently are, to pair with a different partner in each successive game, the advantages of a uniform system are manifest and patent. Its code of original leads are so universally understood that the partners are placed somewhat in touch at once, and so are enabled to play the two hands to a certain extent as one. It must be confessed that the short-suit game does not so readily lend itself to rule of thumb, but it can be systematized to a much greater extent than is generally supposed, and many definite directions can be given which will enable the partners easily to read each others' hands. When both of them have some acquaintance with this method of play I very much question the wisdom of the original lead from the long suit under all circumstances.

To go to the opposite extreme, and insist upon the universal adoption of the short-suit lead would be taking a still bolder step, and would be almost as great a mistake as the invariable lead from the long suit. But if compelled to make a choice I am not at all sure that

it would not be the wiser course to select the short-suit lead with a reliable partner.

This sounds iconoclastic enough, no doubt, but the following experiment made a great impression on me, and is largely responsible for my opinion.

I recently gathered one hundred deals from various sources, taking them just as they came, and throwing out only such as presented no possibility of an original short-suit lead from either side ; short suits being considered those of three cards or less, not headed by either ace or king. These I carefully played over, originally and in duplicate, N–S following the long-suit system in every instance, and E–W the short. Each side was allowed the full advantage of every inference that a player of moderate calibre might be expected to draw from the fall of the cards. The result was in the nature of a surprise, even to one predisposed to the short-suit theory.

In twenty-seven cases the result was a tie, neither system gaining a trick. In the remaining seventy-three, the long-suit players, N–S, made a gain of one or more tricks on twenty-four hands, while the short-suit players, E–W, gained one or more tricks on forty-nine hands. The greatest number of tricks gained on any one hand by the long-suit players was four, and by the short-suit players six. The total number of tricks gained by the short-suit play was more than three times the number gained by their opponents.

These figures are interesting, and worthy of some consideration, though I make no claim that they are

conclusive. Were I inclined to do so, many arguments might be advanced in support of the probability that the results so obtained were about the true averages of gain.

It is a pretty and pleasant performance boldly to lead out and exhaust the trumps, and then to bring in an established long suit, taking trick after trick with fours, threes, and deuces, while aces and kings of other suits fall from the adversaries. But this consummation, though devoutly to be wished, is a much rarer one than the general run of players will admit, and when it fails to come off, the very means adopted for bringing it about result not only in no gain, but almost inevitably in direct loss. The average player, in his efforts to bring in his long suit, is apt to consider the trumps held by his opponents as so many impediments to the end he has in view, and to devote those in his own and his partner's hand to clearing these obstructions from his path. The short-suit player, on the contrary, regards each of his trumps as a potential trick-maker, and strives to justify his opinion of them by playing them with the same care that he does his plain-suit cards. Add to the gain from these methods the tricks frequently gathered in a few moments by the deadly cross-ruff, and those saved by not leading from a single or double tenace, and most, if not all, the difference in the results of the systems played by N-S and E-W in the experimental hundred hands is accounted for. Aces and kings are pretty sure to count for the side to which they are dealt; but the advan-

tages of the short-suit system more than offset the occasionally established small cards of the long suits.

The chief points of difference between the long and the short-suit game may be stated as follows:

The Long-suit game counts on obtaining for cards a trick-making value to which they are not originally entitled, by securing the lead when your opponents' trumps and their master holdings in the suit have been exhausted.

The Short-suit game contemplates the endowment of the intermediate cards of all suits, trumps included, with winning properties, by taking advantage of their position in tenace, by underplay, and by strengthening leads which shall be judiciously finessed by the partner. It also prefers making your own and your partner's trumps separately on the master cards of the enemy, when the opportunity occurs, instead of having them fall together.

Each of these schemes of play has at times so much to recommend it that it would seem absolutely absurd to waste words in arguing for or against the pre-emptory adoption of either. I insist that even the moderate player, if he will give the least thought to the matter, is fully capable of discriminating between the two, instead of blindly following cut and dried precepts for no other reason than that the consensus of authority has hitherto been wholly in that direction.

Give me ♡ A K Q J 2; ♠ A K Q J 10; ◇ A; ♣ Q J, and I will ignore the short-suit game as utterly as if it had never been thought of, although the hand

contains one of its strongest leads. But such a royal assemblage of strong cards seldom falls to the lot of any player.

Far more frequently I pick up a problem of this kind: ♡ J 2; ♠ 9 7 6 4 3; ◇ 10 8 4; ♣ J 5. There is not a certain trick in this hand; not a certain card of re-entry, even though the lead and return of a spade should bring down the five outstanding cards superior to the 9. Surely it does not require a great amount of discernment to perceive that the best chance lies in leading the ♣ J, and not, as "Cavendish," G. W. P., Ames, Hamilton, and most other writers will tell you, the ♠ 4.

Take this pretty fair hand: ♡ 6 4 3 2; ♠ 10 4 3; ◇ A Q 7; ♣ A Q 10. Here the conventional lead is the fourth-best trump, the ♡ 2. Or if you are not tied down strictly to rule, you might prefer to open the strongest of the three plain suits, the clubs. Do either at Duplicate whist, and take my word for it that if your opponent leads the ♠ 10 on the overplay, you will discover that you have lost on that hand at least three times out of five.

Trusting that these preliminary remarks have brought the reader to the point of being willing to add the short-suit weapon to the arms he already carries in the shape of his knowledge of the game, we are prepared to enter into the practical part of the subject more definitely. The reader is in no way called upon to discard established methods, but simply to lay them aside under certain circumstances, and to take up the less familiar

style of play ; a change from which I can assure him he will reap undoubted benefit.

I take it for granted that my readers already know how to play a fair game of the standard long-suit pattern, and are conversant with most of the technical terms that comprise the vocabulary of whist. As a matter of convenience, however, some expressions frequently used in the following pages may be given:

TECHNICAL TERMS.

BRING IN.—To bring in a suit is to make all the cards of it that you hold, after the adverse trumps have been exhausted.

CALL.—To call, or ask for trumps, is to play an unnecessarily high card, and then a lower one of the same suit; it being evident that you are not trying to win the trick. The discard of any card higher than a 7 is also a call.

COMMAND.—You are said to have command of a suit when it is evident that unless some player holds a very unusual number you can take every trick in it, no matter who leads it. You may have command from the start, or may acquire it through the fall of the cards.

CONVENTIONALITY.—Any generally recommended and accepted form of play is conventional.

COVER.—To play a card higher than the one put down by the previous player is to cover.

DEAL.—Each successive play of thirteen tricks is a deal.

ESTABLISHED SUIT.—A suit is established when it is capable of being brought in, and all the cards you hold in it are trick-winners, bar trumping.

ECHO.—In response to partner's trump call or signal, you echo by repeating the call when you have four or more trumps, but cannot at once get the

lead. When you have four or more trumps, and your partner leads them, you echo in the same way if you do not try to take the trick. Many players echo with three trumps. For the plain-suit echo, see "Unblocking."

FINESSE.—See the chapter on that subject.

FOLLOW.—The second hand follows the first; the third the second, etc. To follow suit is to play a card of the same suit as the one led.

FORCE.—You force an adversary by leading the master card of a suit of which he is void. You force your partner by leading a suit which the adversary will win if he does not trump it.

FORCED LEAD.—The original lead from a suit of three cards or less is regarded by long-suit players as forced.

GREAT SUIT.—A suit of more than four cards, and all of them very strong, is called a great suit.

GUARDED.—A high card is said to be guarded when you have with it one or more small ones to throw off in case higher cards than your best should be played.

HAND.—The thirteen cards dealt to each player constitute his hand.

HIGH CARDS.—The ace, king, queen, jack, ten and nine are reckoned as high cards.

HONORS.—Since honors are no longer counted in America, the term may be applied to all face cards, which are the A K Q and J. The ten is sometimes included.

LEAD.—The first card played in every trick is the lead. The original lead is the first card played after the cards are dealt. It is sometimes applied to the first lead made by each player.

LED THROUGH.—The second hand in every trick is led through by his right-hand adversary.

LED UP TO.—You are led up to when you are third or fourth player on any trick.

LONG SUIT.—A suit of four or more cards is nominally a long suit, as distinguished from a short suit, which is three cards or less.

MASTER CARD.—The highest card remaining in any suit is called the master card.

MEDIUM CARDS.—Cards between the king and the eight.

OPENING.—The first lead made by a player is called his opening, or opening lead.

ORIGINAL PLAY.—At Duplicate whist the first play of each board or deal is called the original play, or simply the original.

OVERPLAY.—All subsequent playing of the boards at Duplicate whist is called overplay.

PASS.—You pass when you make no effort to win the trick, although you might do so. You pass when you finesse the card led by your partner.

PLAIN SUIT.—The three suits which are not trumps in any deal are called plain suits. In the following pages the spades, diamonds, and clubs will always be plain suits.

RE-ENTRY.—A card of Re-entry is a winning card

which can be utilized to obtain the lead in some suit other than your long one.

RENOUNCE.—To renounce is to play a card of a different suit from the one led. Renege is another name for it, and both are covered by the term "discarding."

REVOKE.—A player revokes when he fails to follow suit, though able to do so, or when he refuses to comply with a performable penalty. The term is generally confined to trumping a suit of which the player still holds one or more cards.

ROUND.—The same as trick.

RUFFING.—The same as trumping. Cross-ruffing will be explained in a separate chapter.

SEQUENCE.—Two or more cards next in value to each other are said to be in sequence, such as K Q, or Q J 10. Three cards in sequence are called a tierce; four, a quart. If the highest cards held in a suit are in sequence, they are called a head sequence.

SHORT SUIT.—A suit of three cards or less is short. In the following pages a short suit is preferably one of two cards only.

SINGLETON.—The original holding of one card of a suit is called a singleton; sometimes a "sneak," a term which confounds the card with the act of leading it, which is by some considered "sneaking."

SIGNAL.—The same as calling for trumps.

SMALL CARDS.—All cards below the nine are small.

STRENGTHENING.—A strengthening lead is the play of

a Q J 10 or 9, which is not led from any regular high card combination. The hope is that the fourth hand may be forced to play a much higher card in order to win the trick, and that any intermediate or lower cards in the hand of the leader's partner may be strengthened. This strengthening play is one of the principal features of the short-suit game.

STRONG SUIT.—The same as a great suit.

TENACE.—A separate chapter will be devoted to this.

THROWING THE LEAD.—Playing a card that some other player must win, so that the player who throws the lead may be led up to, instead of leading again himself.

TRUMPING IN.—Ruffing a suit in a trick in which you are not last player; usually applied to second-hand trumping a doubtful trick.

UNBLOCKING.—If a player holds exactly four cards in his partner's suit, and does not try to win the trick, he unblocks, or makes a plain-suit echo, by retaining his lowest card, and playing his third-best. On the second round the lowest card is still retained, whether any attempt is made to win the trick or not. This preserves in the third hand a low card, which the original leader can always take if led to him, or which will not block his long suit if he is in the lead himself. If the highest card is kept until the last, it may prevent the original leader from bringing in several smaller cards, which he may have established. The orig-

inal leader can usually detect the unblocking, and for that reason it is called a plain-suit echo, for it shows him that his partner has four cards of the suit. The echo is usually considered more important than the unblocking.

UNDERPLAY.—Playing a small card, when holding a higher, is usually resorted to when there is some strategic purpose in view, and is called underplaying.

VOID.—When a player has no card of a suit dealt to him, he is void. When he has played or discarded all that were dealt to him, he is exhausted.

PERMANENT TRUMP SUIT.—For the sake of convenience all games and diagrams in the following pages will be supposed to be played at Duplicate whist, with the heart suit declared trumps, but no trump card turned up.

SIGNS.—In illustrating various holdings, the plus sign + will be made use of to indicate one or more small cards, the face value of which is unimportant. When the exact number, but not the value, is of moment, an "x" will represent each one of such cards. For instance: A K + will mean ace king and any number of small cards. Q x x x will mean queen and exactly three small cards. K x x + will mean king and at least two others, though more than two would make no difference to the point under consideration.

We may now turn our attention to the practice of

the short-suit game, the principal elements of which are: A strict regard for the value of tenace; deep finesse; and cross-ruffing.

TENACE.

It is really astonishing how universally medium players are lacking in information with regard to the important combination of the cards upon which the name of tenace has been bestowed. A young lady who is conceded to be the best player in her set asked me ingenuously what was meant by tenace, and wherein lay the especial advantage of holding an ace and a ten. To those who are informed, this query may seem ridiculous, since the books tell us that tenace is derived from the Latin *tenax*, tenacious, holding; meaning that you hold back, instead of leading from, the tenace suit. I am by no means satisfied with the correctness of the accepted definition; it might well be that the term actually originated from "ten" and "ace," as my fair young friend supposed, for these two cards constitute an excellent tenace when any two of the three remaining honors fall on the first trick. The ten and ace may have been the first representative of the tenace species noticed by whist naturalists; or perhaps the word may have been coined to indicate the double tenace, first, last, all-embracing, ten-queen-ace.

However that may be, a single major tenace consists of the best and third-best of the unplayed cards of any suit; and the single minor tenace is the second and fourth-best. If the A K Q J and 10 of a suit have

been played, the 9 and 7 form the major tenace ; the 8 and 6 the minor ; just as the A Q and the K J formed these tenaces before the suit was opened. In speaking of the major and minor tenaces in the abstract, the A Q and the K J are always meant.

The double major tenace comprises the first, third, and fifth best of a suit, as A Q 10 ; or the 9 7 5, when all the higher cards have been played. The double minor tenace is the K J 9 of an unplayed suit.

When one player is said to hold tenace over another, it is understood that his hand contains the major tenace; but it must not be supposed that the minor tenace is merely a negative quantity. The same importance that attaches to not leading from a suit containing a major tenace applies with equal force to one containing the minor. The latter is heir-apparent to the elder brother. The moment the master card of a suit is played the minor tenace becomes the major.

When you hold a single or double tenace, major or minor, it is very important to avoid leading the suit, if possible ; for it will be much more to your advantage to have it led by some other player, unless you have so many cards of the suit that it is unlikely to go round more than once. For example: If you lead from the single major tenace you are sure of only one trick. If you wait for the lead to come from some other player, you are likely to make two tricks. If the lead comes from your left-hand adversary you are sure of two tricks, bar trumping. If you lead from a double major tenace, you are sure of but one trick. By wait-

ing you may make three, and if the lead comes twice from your left, nothing but trumping will prevent your so doing.

When we consider how often a long suit contains a single or double tenace, it is not difficult to realize the possible loss involved by leading away from it. As nearly as I can calculate the average, the original leader will find his long suit headed by the single major tenace once in every eight deals, and by the double major tenace once in every twenty-two deals. So that once in every eight hands, or twice in every four boards, at least a point may be lost by leading from a suit headed by a tenace.

The foregoing may appear simple enough, but when I have attempted to explain the subject to players who were above the average in other respects, I have invariably been interrupted by a tossing of the hands, as if in despair, and by protests of hopeless confusion. Especially has this been the case with the gentler sex, and to overcome their difficulties I have endeavored to explain the matter by a simple form of comparative illustration.

Let us strive to conceive a game in which you have a handful of marbles, regularly graded in size from the largest to the smallest, and I have a handful of small cups or thimbles, each of which corresponds in its dimensions to one of your marbles. Let us suppose my object is to cover each one of your marbles with a thimble, and that your aim is to prevent my doing so.

Now, if you first place a marble on the table, say No. 1 in the illustration, all I have to do is to select the corresponding thimble and cover it. When you put down No. 2 and No. 3, I will cover them in the same manner. All your marbles will then be exactly covered, thus:

But if I am to play first, and place No. 1 thimble on the table, there is nothing to prevent you from placing under it your very smallest marble, No. 3 for instance. My thimble completely covers your marble, it is true, but advantage has not been taken of its fullest capacity. You now hold the advantage, and I must eventually be forced to put down a thimble which will not cover your remaining marble, and you will win.

It is easy to see that in a wildly exciting game of this character, the last play would be everything, and the player who had the choice (as one always has with a tenace suit), and elected to play first, would be considered very stupid. It should be equally clear that the only resource for the player who was compelled to begin would be for him to play his smallest marble or thimble first.

This is tenace in a nutshell ; or, rather, in a thimble.

Let us take the A Q 10 of hearts instead of the thimbles, No. 1, 2, 3 ; and the K J 9 instead of the marbles. Now, if you hold the minor tenace and play first, all I have to do is just to cover the card you play, and as long as you continue to play first, I can cover anything you put down. On the other hand, if I begin, and put down the ace, you will play your smallest card, just as you put your smallest marble under my largest thimble. The ace wins the trick, it is true, but full advantage has not been taken of its capacity, for though capable of capturing a king, it has been expended on a nine. If we each held six cards of a suit, you having all the odd and I the even cards, you could play the trey on my ace, and after that you could cover every card I put down.

It will now readily be seen that any player holding a tenace, and electing to lead from it, commits a blunder. If he is forced to lead it, it should be equally apparent that his best chance would be to play his smallest card first.

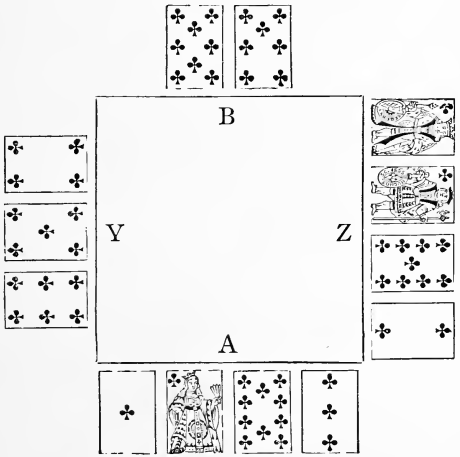
That this comparison may be considered common-

place, or even childish, I am well aware, but it often happens that just such homely illustrations prove the most effective. I realize that the parallel cannot be carried out to the end, but it is sufficiently exact to serve our purpose.

Now let us return to the actual cards, and to some of the simpler phases of tenace, premising that to avoid complication in the following illustrations, trumping by partner or opponents will not be taken into consideration.

Let us assume that you are the original leader, A, and that you hold three indifferent trumps, four small spades, two medium diamonds, and that the clubs are distributed as in this diagram :

No. 1.



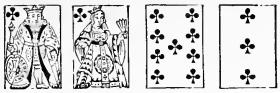
According to the tenets of the long-suit game, you must lead a club. If you do, you are sure to lose a trick, perhaps more, no matter which you lead. You lead the 3; Y plays the 4; B the 7; Z wins with the 9, and opens another suit. When you get into the lead again, if you lead the ace, Y and B play small, and Z drops the 2, leaving him not only in command of the suit with the king, but with tenace over you. If your second lead is not the ace, Z wins whatever you play, and you have lost two tricks; the ace being your only hope for a trick in the suit.

Had you led the higher of your two diamonds, and waited until some other player was forced to open the club suit, you must have won two tricks. If, after winning the first, you continued the diamonds, and waited for clubs to be led again, you might have made three tricks, or even four, in the club suit.

Suppose the lead finally comes from Y, who begins with the 6; whatever Z plays you win, and then you lead some other suit. Every time clubs are led, you lie tenace over anything Z plays. The result would be the same if any other player opened the suit; you take every trick, no matter who leads clubs, provided you abstain from leading them yourself.

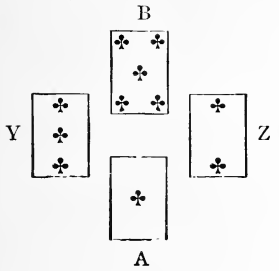
The principle set forth in this illustration applies to all stages of the play, and to any rank of the cards when you can place them with sufficient certainty to know that you lie tenace.

Suppose you are Y on the first trick, and hold these clubs;

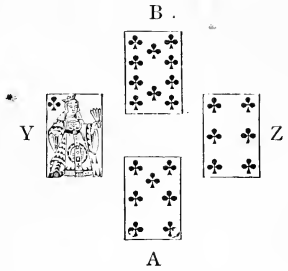


The play on the first two tricks is :

TRICK 1.

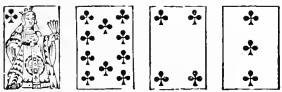


TRICK 2.



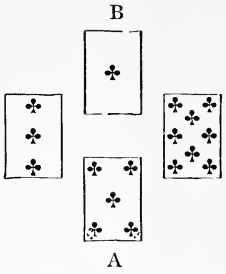
If A's second lead is his original fourth-best, you know there are two higher clubs still in his hand, and that they are the J and 8 ; because all others above the seven have been played, or are held by you Therefore you hold tenace over A in clubs, and you should be on the alert to profit by it.

Suppose you hold these clubs second hand :

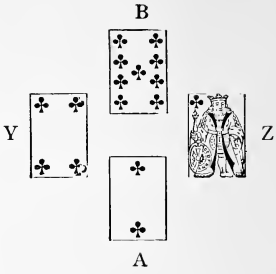


The first two tricks are ;—

TRICK 1.



TRICK 2.



In this case A's original lead is his fourth-best, and you know he holds three cards higher than the 5. The fall and your own hand tell you these cards are the J 7 6. Therefor your Q 10 are tenace over his J 7.

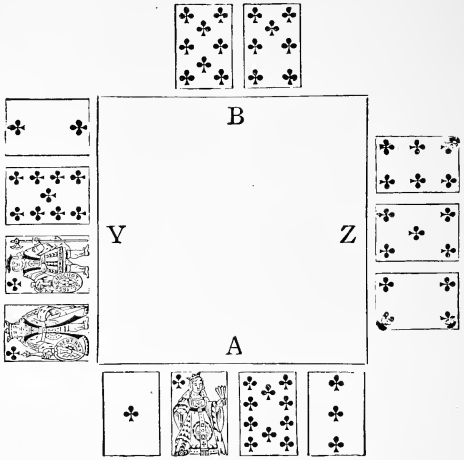
When a tenace is thus established by the fall of the cards, you should be prepared to take advantage of it, but it does not always follow that you can do so. You may get into the lead toward the end of the hand when the trumps are out, but see no hope that your tenace will be led up to. In the illustrations, B and Z are both void of the suit, and A may not get into the lead again. In such circumstances, it might be better to make sure of a trick with the club king in diagram 1, or the club queen in diagram 2, instead of running the risk of getting none in the effort to make two. Decisions in such cases must be based on the previous fall of the cards, and much must be left to the discretion of the player; but it can be taken as a pretty safe rule that with a tenace of this description you are not apt to

lose in the long run by waiting to have the suit led, instead of leading it yourself. Still, the reader must not forget that a tenace that is only developed on the second round is not so valuable as one in hand before the suit is opened. When there is no hope of getting the tenace led up to, the one trick that the master card assures should be made at once. This point of pausing to consider the position, and to decide between the probabilities for and against leading from this variety of tenace, has been quite overlooked by most of the standard writers on whist.

As the cards lie in diagram 1, your gain is certain as long as you do not lead the suit yourself. Even if the minor tenace was not in one hand, no matter how the cards composing it were distributed, no possible loss, bar trumping, could result from waiting for some other player to open the suit.

Let us suppose the minor tenace in the first illustration to be on your left. This is a very different, and for you, less desirable state of affairs. It is an easy matter to hold tenace over your right-hand adversary; all that is needful being to refrain from leading the suit yourself; but to hold it effectually over the enemy on your left is beyond your individual control. You may refuse to lead the suit yourself, but if your partner or your right-hand adversary does so, you are immediately placed at a disadvantage, and the full possibility of your holding in that suit cannot be realized, for you can only count on one trick with certainty,—the ace. This would be the position:

No. 2.



If you are A, the only reasonable chance of securing more than one trick in the suit is that Y will open it. This will give you two tricks at least. That you will win all the tricks is out of the question, but with a little patience it is highly probable that you will win two. It is more than probable that Y will lead the suit, as he is the only player with sufficient strength in it to do so.

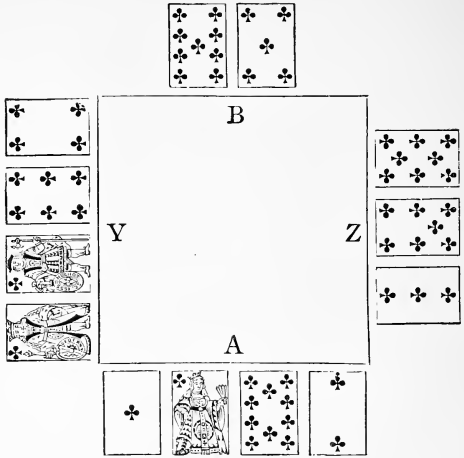
The reader will perceive that in general he is advised to avoid leading suits that contain tenaces, unless the suit is so long, seven or more cards, as to render it unlikely that the minor tenace is against you, as well as probable that the suit will be trumped on the second round. If, for instance, you have major tenace at the

head of a suit of eight cards, there are only five cards among the three other players, which does not admit of their having two apiece, and makes the odds very much against either of your opponents holding the minor tenace. It is also apparent that the suit will be trumped on the second round at the latest. In such a case I would lead the ace to show partner my suit, with the chance of catching the king and establishing the suit at once. If I was so fortunate, I should lead trumps if I had a card of re-entry in another suit.

Your hand may be such that your only available lead is from a suit of four, five, or six cards containing a tenace, and for all you know to the contrary, your partner may hold one of the minor tenace cards. With the four-card suit, the conventional play would be the smallest, which is all right; but with five or six cards you should depart from the established rule, which is to lead the ace, playing your fourth-best instead, so as to avoid promoting the minor tenace if it should chance to lie with the adversary. I have already spoken of the conversion of the minor into the major tenace by playing the master card, and you should be on your guard against so promoting it, not only when you are the original leader, but when the fall of the cards shows that one of your opponents holds the second and fourth-best of the suit. In such a case you win a trick by leading the best card, it is true, but you also exchange positions with your opponent, which may cost you two tricks in the end.

Let us suppose you are A in the following diagram:

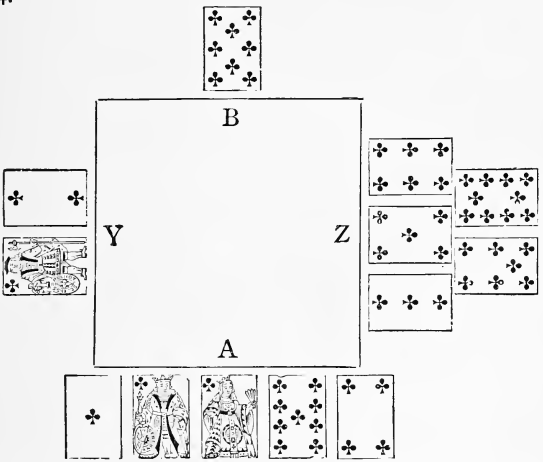
No. 3.



You lead the 2, Y plays the 4, B the 9, Z the 3. B opens his own suit, and we will suppose you regain the lead. This position is an exception to the conventional rule for playing the best card on the second round if you hold it. If you lead the ace you at once promote the minor tenace, which is marked in Y's hand. B cannot have held either king or jack and played the 9, and Z would not allow the 9 to win if he held either of those cards, so they must both be with Y. If you play ace, Y plays the 6, and his K J becomes major tenace over your Q 10, giving him the last two tricks in the suit. Your second lead should be the 10, which Y will of course win with the jack, but your tenace is preserved, and if he is compelled to lead the suit you win the last two tricks.

Take another case. You are A in this illustration, and have exhausted the trumps, remaining with the lead.

No. 4.



You lead the Q, Y plays the 2, B the 8, Z the 3. You continue with the K, Y plays J, B renounces, Z drops the 5. If you go on with the ace you lose a trick, for you should realize at once that Z holds minor tenace, 10 7 to your A 9. If you play the ace, Z will drop the 6, and lie tenace over you, winning the last two tricks in the suit. But if you lead the 4, Z will be forced to take it, and you will lie tenace over him, winning the last two tricks in the suit.

This promotion of the minor tenace is a point often overlooked by players who carefully preserve their tenaces up to a certain point. They avoid leading from

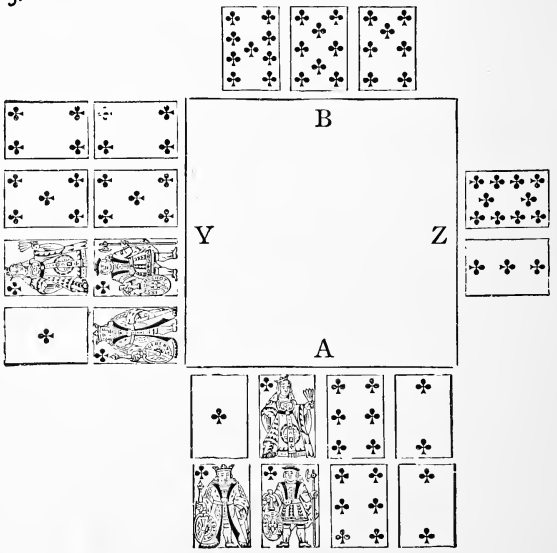
tenace suits, but if forced to do so play their highest card, when a low card would be the proper lead.

Another point suggests itself that is frequently missed by players of more than average ability, and which none of the standard writers that I have studied have more than touched upon, and that is the location of tenaces by the drop.

In diagram 3 we saw how A was able to locate the minor tenace in Y's hand. There are many cases in which the fourth hand is put in possession of information as to the location of tenaces.

Suppose you are Z in this diagram:

No. 5.



A leads the 2, Y plays the 4, B the 7, you the 10. This situation often arises, but too many players in Z's place, on winning with the 10, content themselves by remarking that it is a cheap trick, and with only a vague impression that B is weak in that suit, turn their attention to opening a fresh suit. A moment's attention to the fall of the cards and his own hand should show Z that the four honors are divided between A and Y, and in the relation of major and minor tenace. This will become evident if the cards are placed.

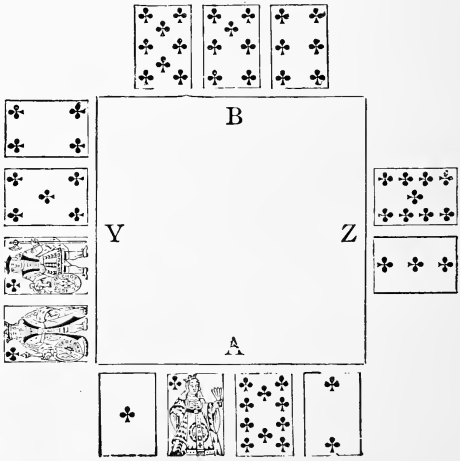
A cannot have ace and king, or he would have led one of them; nor can he have ace, queen, jack; or king, queen, jack; or king and queen. He might have queen and jack, but in that event Y must have ace and king, and would have played one second-hand. If A holds ace, jack and two others, Y must have king and queen, and would have played one of them. If A held ace and three small, Y must have held king, queen, jack, and would have played one of them. All this goes to show that the only honors A can have held when he led the 2, were the ace and queen, or the king and jack; and whichever combination he held, Y must have held the other, since neither B nor Z hold any card higher than the 10.

Most writers on whist discuss this situation so far, and then leave it. Foster, in his usual concise and comprehensive way of stating a rule in easily remembered words, says: "If neither third nor fourth hand has an honor in the suit led, the major and minor tenaces are divided between the first and second players."

He then gives an example showing that if neither third nor fourth hand has a card above the 9, the 10 is the key to the position of the major tenace, showing A Q 10 must be with the leader, and K J with the second hand.

An examination of the position will show that this must be so. If A holds king, jack, ten, deuce, and follows the usual fashion, he will lead the ten, although many players now lead the fourth-best from this combination. If he holds king, jack, and two small cards, Y having ace, queen, ten, and another, Y's play is a high card second hand. Y will also play a high card second hand if he holds either king, jack, ten, or ace, queen, jack. So if the fourth hand wins with the 9, the five honors can be distributed only as in the following diagram:

No. 6



If Z knows that A holds the major tenace, what use should he make of his knowledge? Obviously, he should at once return the opponent's lead, unless he is long in the suit himself.

If Z has any doubt as to the location of the major tenace, as in diagram 5, and it should turn out that Y has it, Z is still making the best lead possible for his partner's hand; while if it is with A, as in diagram 6, the immediate return of the suit brings about the situation discussed some pages back, when it was shown that with the minor tenace on the left, the major was placed at a disadvantage. If Z returns the suit at once, he forces A to give up the ace and the command, or to sacrifice his queen to Y's king.

If Z is unable to win the first trick, B capturing it with a 9 or 10, there is no certainty about the division of the tenaces, for B may have played in from a sequence. But when the fourth hand wins the trick, and holds no card higher than the 10, he knows the tenaces are divided between first and second players; and if he holds nothing higher than the 9, and wins the trick, he knows the leader has the double major tenace, and that second hand has king jack. In either case his duty is to return the lead at once, unless he is so long in the suit that B might trump.

From the foregoing we gather the following rule: ***When the fourth player wins the first round of a suit in which he holds no honor, he should return the lead at once.***

This is an opportunity that frequently presents itself

to the wide-awake player, and if you will commit this rule to memory and put it in practice when next you play duplicate whist, it will not be the fault of that play if you do not gain on the board.

Of course, it is understood that undue precedence should not be given to this return lead if there is something clearly better in your hand. But the position should be noted, and advantage taken of it later in the hand. Unless it is very plain that you have a better game, I should advise the immediate return of the suit, for you must remember that in order to derive the full benefit from the situation, you may have to return the suit a second time. If you do not avail yourself of the first opportunity, you may not be able to get into the lead again; or your right-hand adversary may discard the suit in the meantime, and trump it when you return it.

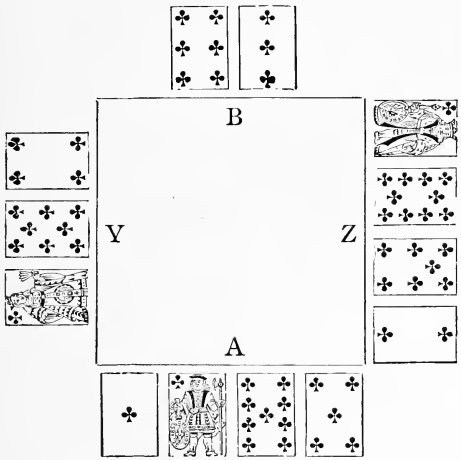
As an objection to this rule it may be urged that the immediate return of an opponent's suit is often taken by the partner as an invitation to a force. But the tenace in your partner's hand, and the fall of the cards to the first trick should tell him the object of the return, and he will not necessarily force you, unless with the direct object of getting you to over-trump B.

If a player avoids leading from suits containing any form of the major or minor tenaces, he should be prepared to follow the same course with all suits that contain what might be termed vice-tenaces. These may be defined as combinations of cards that will become tenaces if certain cards fall on the first round of

the suit. To this family belong all such combinations as A J+, A 10+, etc. If the player has a passably good lead in any other suit, such combinations should be avoided.

Let us suppose you are A in the following diagram :

No. 7.



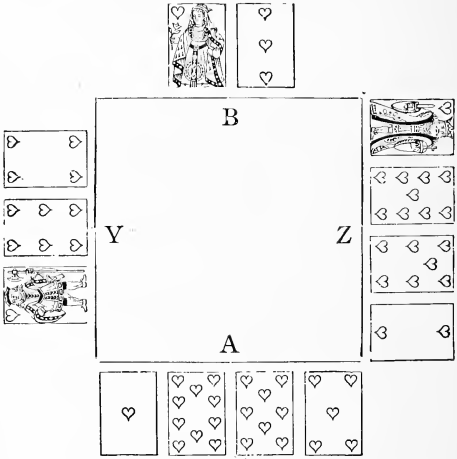
If you lead the 5 from this suit, Y will play the 4, B the 3, and Z the 7. If you lead the A on the second round, you will win the trick, but Z will hold tenace with his K 10 over your J 9. If your partner gets in before you do, and returns the suit, you will have to put up the ace to shut out the queen, leaving Z with tenace over you as before.

On the other hand, if you wait until Z leads the suit,

he will begin with the 2, and his partner will win with the queen, leaving you with the double major tenace over the original leader, which must make the three remaining tricks in the suit, bar trumping, no matter who leads it, so that you avoid doing so.

Trump tenaces are the most valuable, because if you play properly you are sure of realizing all the advantages of such combinations. Suppose trumps to be your only four-card suit, and that you are A in the following diagram :

No. 8.



If you open the trump suit with the 5, Z will win your partner's queen. If you lead the ace on recovering the lead, or if your partner returns the suit and

forces you to play the ace to shut out the jack, you will find tenace against you, and any other trick in the suit impossible.

If you wait, and any other player leads trumps, you and your partner take every trick in the trump suit. If you signal, your partner will lead the queen; if Z signals his partner will lead the jack, which your partner will cover; if Z leads trumps, your partner's queen will win the first round, and leave you with the major tenace.

With the cards divided as in this diagram, nothing can prevent your winning every trick in trumps, provided you do not lead them yourself. It furnishes an excellent example of the difference between playing your trumps simply as so many abstractors of other trumps, and using them to make tricks in themselves. If A, in this illustration, had led trumps to defend an established suit, as so many do, he would have lost three tricks in the trump suit alone; a loss that it would be very difficult to offset by the problematical bringing in of a long suit, the higher cards of which would probably win in any case.

I do not advise holding back a suit headed by A J, or A 10, when there is no other available lead. A player is not expected to follow any rule to the detriment of his hand; but if he has some other fairly good lead, I think he should regard such combinations as A J, A 10, as belonging to the tenace family, and to be played as such. Even if these do not develop into regular tenaces, the player holding them back will probably get

more for his money, so to speak, by waiting than by leading them. If you lead a small card from either of these combinations, the trick may be won fourth-hand by a 6 or a 7. If you begin with the ace, you catch nothing but small cards. If you wait to have the suit led up to you, you either win with the jack or ten, or capture a king or queen with your ace. In either case the ace wins a trick; but if it is led, advantage is not taken of its full capacity, and its strength is expended on capturing deuces and treys. If it is led up to, you get the full benefit of its trick-making ability, at the same time capturing an honor, the loss of which may be deeply felt by the enemy.

The same argument applies, with limitations, to suits headed by ace, king, jack. If the suit is long, the king must be led; but if it contains only these three honors, by all means wait. If you lead, the odds are against your making more than two tricks. If the lead comes from your left, you are sure of three, because you lie tenace over the queen.

Of course the reader understands that he must not expect to find in every hand such distributions of the cards as are given in these diagrams. The principle is the point, and the knowledge to take advantage of such and similar situations when they do occur.

The use or neglect of tenace presents many more opportunities for loss or gain than would be imagined by a player who had never given the subject much attention. Promptly recognizing and taking advantage of such opportunities when they occur will often cause

your opponents to remark: "Well, I cannot understand how we lost on that board; for I am sure I do not see where we made any mistakes." That is just it. They do not see the mistake. They make no striking blunders, but they fail to make the most of their hands.

When you have a suit containing the minor tenace, king, and jack, it is even more important that you should have it led up to, instead of leading away from it, than it would be if it were the major tenace, ace queen. The major tenace insures at least a trick, but the minor tenace, if led away from, may not win a trick in the suit. If the minor tenace is led up to it will probably be good for two tricks, and it is certainly good for one, bar trumping. As there is more chance of loss with the minor tenace than with the major, it is proportionately more important that it should be led up to, and not away from.

If the player on your left leads up to the major tenace in your hand, and you win with the queen, you are left in command with the ace, and can make it at once, or hold it up, as you see fit. Similarly, if you win with ace over the king, and are left in command with the queen. But with the minor tenace, even if you win the first trick, you are not left in command. If third hand plays 9 or 10, and you win with the jack, ace queen are out over your king and others. If third-hand plays queen, and you win with the king, the ace ten are out against you. Your first consideration must be to prevent these two cards from making against you,

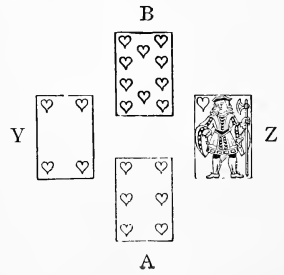
and this you can often accomplish by returning the lead at once with a small card. If the original leader has the ace he will probably put it on; but if you allow the suit to be led through you, you may lose your king if the player on your left has a good finesse, or if his partner leads him a finessing card. This gives us a general rule that

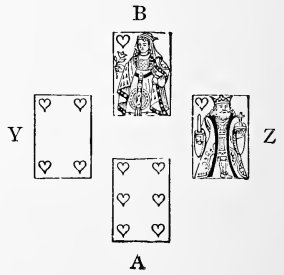
When fourth-hand wins the first round of a suit in which he holds minor tenace, he should at once return the lead with his smallest card.

Let us suppose that you are Z and hold these trumps:

If the cards fall in either of these ways on trick 1, your play would be to return the heart 3 at once.

No. 9.





Although the trump suit is used in this example, the reader must remember that it will sometimes be unwise to return an adverse trump lead. In plain suits the return may be regarded as imperative.

What I have written in this chapter should be enough to impress the student with the importance of playing tenaces to the best advantage. Constant practice and observation will improve his tenace play, and we may now turn our attention to finesse, which is very closely allied to tenace, as it depends for its success on the same principle of taking advantage of the position of the cards.

FINESSE.

Hamilton defines finesse as "any form of strategy, underplay, or artifice." Upon this liberal definition many thousand pages might be written; but with us an outline of the principal features of finesse, as it is generally understood, will suffice.

"G. W. P.," in his "American Whist Illustrated," tells us that there are several varieties of finesse: The returned finesse; the finesse by trial; the finesse on the partner; and the finesse by speculation. These are nice distinctions that are very interesting to the deep student, but of little value to the ordinary player. The varieties of strategy to which the term "finesse" is usually applied will be found to be covered by this definition:

Any effort to make a subordinate card accomplish as much as a higher, is a finesse.

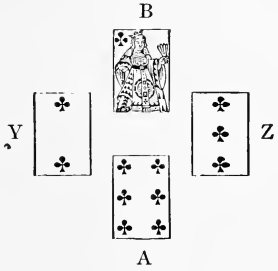
A player may make this effort in various ways, as for instance: By playing, as second or third hand, the lower of two high cards not in sequence, in the hope that no intermediate card lies with the opponent who has yet to play. By passing, instead of playing his best card third hand on a medium high card led by his partner. By adopting either of these methods, not with much hope of winning the trick, but in the ex-

pectation that in order to secure the trick, the adversary will have to play a higher card than any held by the player who finesses. By adopting any of the foregoing when the player knows he will lose the trick, but can reasonably count on forcing a disproportionately high card from the adversary.

These may be briefly reviewed, with examples. You are B in the following diagram, with these cards:

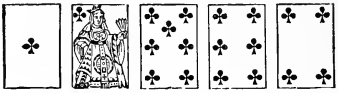
The first trick is:

No. 10.



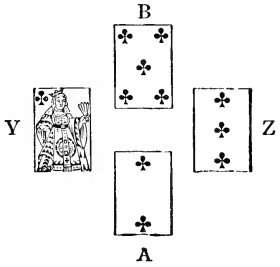
Your play is the queen, not the ace, which is a finesse against the king being in Z's hand, the odds against which are 2 to 1, as either A or Y may have it. This is the simplest form of the finesse, and is so generally recommended and followed that it has become an imperative rule of play for the third hand.

You are Y and hold these cards :



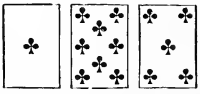
The first trick is :

No. 11.



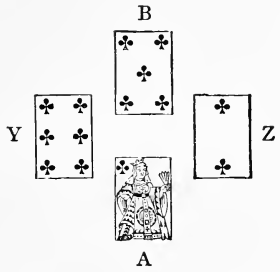
Your finesse is the queen, in the hope that the king may be with the leader, or with your partner.

You are B and hold :



The first trick is :

No. 12.

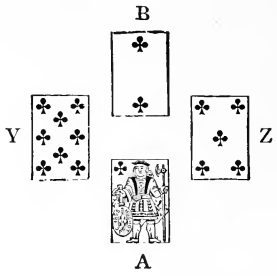


Instead of playing your best, you pass the card led by your partner, in the hope that it may win the trick. The situation is almost the same as if you held both ace and queen yourself, and played the queen, but the odds in favor of its success are not so great, as the leader cannot have the king.

You are B and hold :

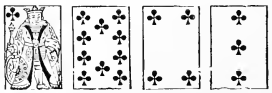
The first trick is :

No. 13.



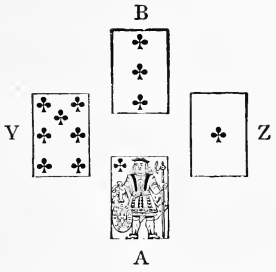
You pass your partner's jack, in the hope that the queen is on your right. This finesse is not usually considered sound unless you are strong in trumps, for you run the risk of an unguarded queen taking a trick in a suit in which you have both ace and king.

You are B and hold :



The first trick is :

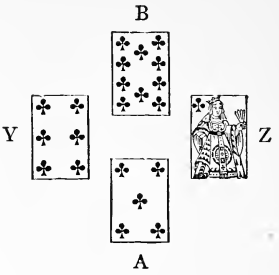
No. 14.



In this case there is no hope that the jack led will win the trick, for the ace must be on your left; but there is a finesse against both ace and queen being in one hand. By passing the jack, it may force the ace, and leave you with tenace over the queen in Y's hand.

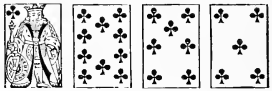
What appears to be a very risky or deep finesse is sometimes called for by the condition of your hand, which is the only guide after all. Suppose you hold tenace in spades and diamonds, and in hearts only the king and deuce. If your partner leads clubs, and you hold ace ten and others, you may finesse the ten on the first trick, thus :—

No. 15.



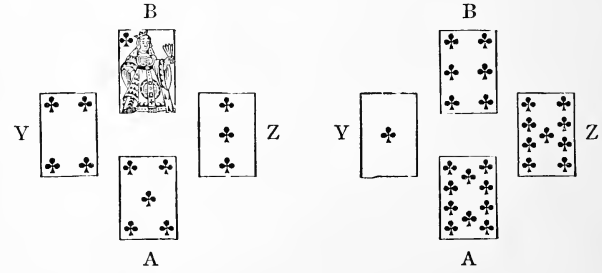
If the fourth hand wins the trick he must lead up to your guarded king of trumps, or to your tenaces in the other suits.

The obligatory finesse is usually the most puzzling to the beginner. You are A and hold :—



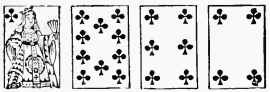
The first two tricks are as follow :—

No. 16.



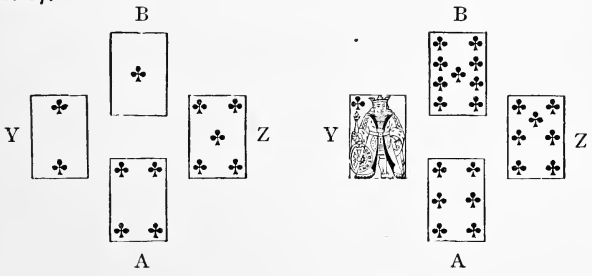
The mere fact of your partner's queen winning the first trick shows Z has not the ace, and your partner's return of the six shows he does not hold it; so it must be with Y. You finesse the ten, in the hope that Y has not the jack also. In this case you have no hope of winning the trick, but trust to the ten to bring down the ace, leaving you in command with the king. If Y has both ace and jack, it does not matter what you play; but if you play your king, you are certain to lose, no matter how the cards lie.

Suppose you are A and hold :—



The first two tricks are :—

No. 17.

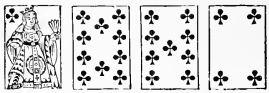


Your partner's 9 is evidently the higher of two cards, the 9 and 3. The king must be with Y, for Z

would have played the best card on the second round if he held it. By passing the 9, you finesse against the king and jack being both in Y's hand; just as you finessed against A J.

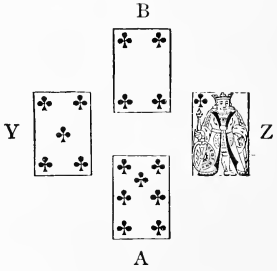
There is another variety of this finesse, in which you cannot so positively mark the high card in fourth hand but know it is better than any you hold.

You are B and hold:



The first trick is:—

No. 18.



If the 7 is your partner's fourth-best, he must have three higher cards in his hand, but he has not both ace and king. As you have neither of these cards, it must be one of them that is against him. You know there is no other high card against him, and if Y holds it the 7 will win the trick; if Z holds it, he will have to play it, so you can safely pass.

This is generally known as finessing by the eleven rule, and is given in "Foster's Whist Manual." The principle is that if the spots on the card led are deducted from eleven, the remainder is the number of cards, higher than the one led, out against the leader. In this example the 7 led shows four only against your partner, of which you hold three, and the one other must be the ace or the king.

Except in such cases as the foregoing, all finesses are problematical, and success depends largely upon the situation at the moment, and the judgment of the player. For this reason most of our whist authorities recommend but two forms of the finesse: That of the queen from ace queen in any suit; and the finesse of the trump jack when holding ace king jack and others. The latter is usually resorted to only when the player holding this combination has led, and then changed to a plain suit, so as to finesse on his partner's return of the trump. The same manœuvre may be used in plain suits, if strong in trumps.

There is one exception to the first finesse, which is when the third hand holds ace queen alone. It is usual to play the ace, and it is imperative on the lead of a ten. The object is to avoid blocking the suit. As a general rule, finessing on your partner's suit is considered bad play in the long-suit game, because he wants all the high cards out of his way as soon as possible. But even at the risk of delaying the establishment of a suit, I think the practice of finessing might be advantageously carried much further than it is at present.

In the short-suit game, finessing on partner's lead is one of the principal features, because he more frequently leads from weakness than from strength. If he leads the highest card of a weak suit, you give it a clear path, to accomplish what it can, retaining any higher cards you may hold in the suit, in the hope that they may win tricks later on. Just what cards should be passed in this manner will be considered when we come to the practical playing of the short-suit game.

To the ambitious student I may repeat the advice given in connection with tenace. Practice continually, and note carefully in actual play the instances of loss or gain that occur from finessing. The gain of a point or two in every third or fourth hand in an evening's play at duplicate whist is not an unreasonable expectation, if the adversaries are orthodox long-suit players. Little more will be required than an occasional judicious finesse of partner's moderately high cards, originally led.

The student should bear in mind, as a good standard to go by, that whenever the success of a finesse means the gain of several tricks, and its failure the loss of only one, the finesse should be made; but if the loss may outweigh the gain, it should not be attempted. Never forget how much depends on the cards in your hand at the time, and on those that have fallen. If a finesse, even if unsuccessful, will place the lead to your advantage, make it by all means. And last of all; if you consider yourself a lucky man, finesse boldly; if you are a "Jonah" you must be more careful.

CROSS-RUFFING.

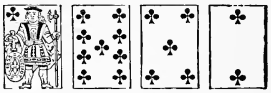
The third especial reliance of the short-suit player, cross-ruffing, although the least important, is at times the most effective. A cross-ruff is established when you and your partner are each void of a different suit, and you lead such suits to each other to trump. Under such circumstances the adversaries are usually powerless to help themselves until they can over-trump and, if strong enough, exhaust the remaining trumps. In the meantime the cross-ruffers have used their small trumps to the utmost advantage, since they could not be spent more economically than one at a time, nor more advantageously than upon the enemy's master cards.

This method of trick-making is so fascinating to some players that they try for it from the start. But it is far too adventitious to be brought about by systematic play ; the most a player can do is to seize such opportunities as offer during the regular course of play. The short-suit game, however, from the very nature of its original lead, constantly tends to cross-ruffing.

It is difficult to give definite directions for cross-ruffing. The player can only watch the fall of the

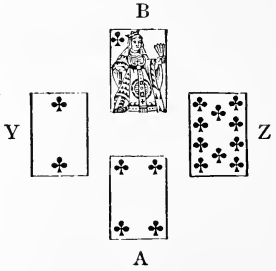
cards, and if he has a singleton, be on the alert for any indications that his partner is void of some other suit. Even then he may not establish the cross-ruff, but he has good grounds for attempting it.

Suppose you are Y and hold :



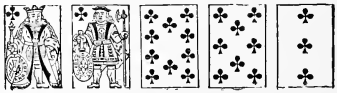
The first trick is :

No. 19.



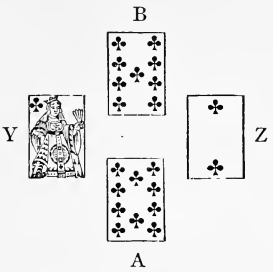
Leaving out of consideration the trump signal, which renders all inference uncertain, your partner, Z, has no more of the suit. B will probably not return it, and should you get into the lead and find yourself with a singleton in another suit, it will be better for you to lead that first, in order to establish a cross-ruff.

Suppose you are A and hold :



The first trick is :

No. 20.

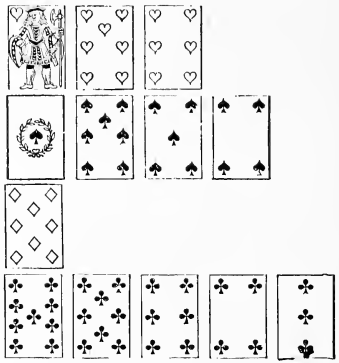


Your partner, B, has evidently no more of the suit, but you should not force him if you have a singleton in another suit to lead, for that may establish a cross-ruff.

I am well aware that this advice to lead singletons, even with a cross-ruff in view, is apt to meet with emphatic protest from staunch long-suiters ; but I do not believe such strong objections would be made if they gave the subject more attention. I think this attention might be granted, but for the odium that attaches to leading a "sneak." The name has killed the play, like the dog that was hung. Had the proper title of "singleton" always been applied to the one-card lead, I am positive it would never have acquired such disfavor. In these *fin de siècle* days, I am sanguine enough to believe that the time is not far distant when a player will lead a singleton deuce from a ruffing hand as readily as he now leads a trump from A K Q J 10. The object of all whist play is to win the game, and if a singleton lead appears to be the most

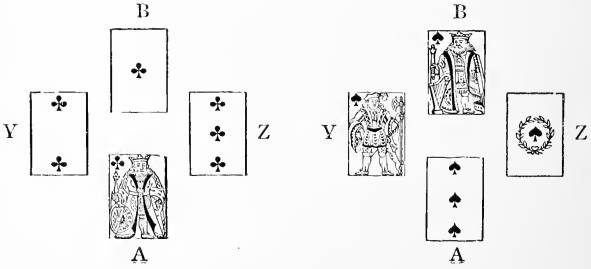
likely way, it should be adopted, despite the fact that G. W. P. tells us: "The result is nothing, the proper management of the cards everything;" as if it were possible to divorce the one from the other.

As an example of playing for a cross-ruff, let us take a hand I once held at duplicate whist. I was the dealer, hearts trumps, and held these cards:



The first two tricks were:

No. 21.



The fall of the cards marks B with the jack or no more clubs; and Y as void of spades. For the third trick I submit that the singleton diamond is Z's best lead, for in that suit alone is it possible for Y to win a trick, and if he returns a small diamond, the cross-ruff in diamonds and spades is established.

Unfortunately, the player who held my cards on the original play did not remember just how he had played it; but as he had been taught to eschew "sneak" leads it is almost certain that he led the small club at the third trick. I led the diamond 8, Y won with the ace, the cross-ruff followed as I expected, and we gained three tricks on the board.

It is only by means of singleton leads that any effort can be made to get a cross-ruff going; but such leads have been so roundly abused by most of the writers on whist that it would be a rash apprentice who would lift his feeble voice in opposition to the masters. Still I cannot refrain from placing on record a "sneaking" whisper in favor of the singleton lead, when the occasion seems to favor its success in establishing a cross-ruff.

The usual objections to the singleton are: 1. That it deceives the partner, who cannot tell a singleton from a strong suit. 2. That it exposes your own weakness. 3. That it may establish the suit in the hands of your adversaries.

If your partner is a good short-suit player, and knows you to be one, he will not often be deceived to his hurt. The more the adversaries are deceived the

better, whatever the modern school of American leaders may preach to the contrary, and urge in favor of publishing general information. Even if your partner misunderstands your lead and returns it under the impression that it is your long-suit, your object is accomplished, and you get the ruff. The great danger is that he will lead trumps.

With regard to exposing your weakness, the adversaries must be very strong to profit much by the knowledge of your weakness in a single suit.

As to the danger of establishing the suit in the hands of the adversaries, your partner's possibilities reduce this danger one-third, and if the singleton is never led without some trump strength to back it up, there should be no objection to the adversaries having an established suit, provided you are prepared to trump it every time it is led. I do not recommend the original lead of a singleton without some strength in trumps; but later in the hand the lead of such a card may be the only chance, regardless of the trump strength, as in diagram No 21. If your opponents are very strong in trumps they will probably lead them, whether you have begun with a singleton or not; but if you can get in a small trump before this happens, it may gain a point otherwise impossible.

After carefully studying the subject from every point of view, I cannot see how the lead of a singleton can work damage in the long run, if it is always accompanied by moderate strength in trumps, such as four fairly good ones. In making this assertion I do not

wish to be understood as championing the hap-hazard leading of singletons merely to make one or two little trumps. I urge it only when you have strength in trumps, or see a clear chance for a cross-ruff, or in preference to leading from suits of not more than four cards, headed by a tenace.

The lead must be governed by the hand before you at the moment, or by the fall of the cards. When you can make some other lead only by breaking tenace suits, or when you see a probability of a cross-ruff, do not be afraid of leading a singleton, if you have one, simply because anathema maranatha has hitherto been thundered upon its devoted head.

Dashing, eccentric play, by itself, is sure to be defeated by orthodox conventionality; but if boldness is supported by a knowledge of the game, it will win against cautious science every time. Place at a table four players of equal theoretical skill, and the bolder, more self-reliant, less hampered-by-rule-when-the-situation-shows-that-to-follow-rule-will-be-ruinous pair of the two will invariably carry off the victory.

CONVENTIONAL LEADS.

By taking the conventional long-suit leads as a standard we are enabled to detect the short-suit leads by the difference between the two. If, as your partner, I lead a card that by general consent is led only when accompanied by a certain other card, and you know that I do not hold that other card, you also know that I have not made a conventional lead. This is negative evidence that I have made a short-suit lead.

I take it for granted that my readers are more or less familiar with some method of leading from long suits; but the ability to detect short-suit leads is so dependent on thoroughly understanding and following some one system that a brief summary of the leads upon which the inferences in the following pages are based is absolutely necessary.

A schism exists among whist players on the subject of original leads. One party loyally sustains what are known as the "old-style" leads; while the other pins its faith to the "new," or "American." Between these two in the abstract, it is not for me to decide. Whichever way the weight of published testimony may lean, the more conclusive practical proofs seem to be with the "old-style" men. I believe that whenever the question has been put to a practical test, they have invariably been victorious.

The new, or American leads, are at times wonderfully effective in assisting a player to read his partner's hand; but there are times when they leave him utterly in the dark on the all-important first round, and do not give as much information as the old leads would under the same circumstances.

The old system is especially adapted to our purpose on account of the definite nature of the queen lead. Upon this card the short-suit player relies for his most effective lead; but under the "American" system the partner can never tell with certainty from what combination a queen is led. It may be from any one of four widely different holdings: A K Q x x; K Q x x x; Q J 10 +; or Q J 10 alone, and it may be impossible for partner to tell which, on the first round.

The same difficulty arises with the jack. In American leads this card is lead from A K Q J x; K Q J x x; and J x x. Foster suggested in *Whist* for July, 1895, that the queen should be led from the first of these, so that the jack might always deny the ace, and that has since come to be the common practice, so that the jack has the same meaning in both systems of leading.

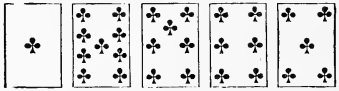
While the short-suit game may be effectively added to the repertoire of those who prefer the American leads, I prefer the old style, on account of its greater simplicity, and in the following pages all discussion and analysis will be based on the use of that system.

In "Foster's Whist Manual" these leads will be found set forth in a brief, ingenious and attractive form,

so that they fix themselves in the memory almost without effort on the student's part. As a knowledge of these leads is such a necessary preliminary to any exposition of the short-suit game, I shall give a brief synopsis of them here.

The numerals placed under the cards are to show the first and second leads; the latter will merely be indicated, without entering into explanations.

THE ACE.—Holding Ace and any four, or more, except the King; that is, at least five cards in all, you lead the Ace.



With so many of the suit you cannot run the risk of your adversary winning the first trick with a small card, and your ace being trumped on the second round. The ace led originally may also catch a high card in the enemy's hand. Your second lead is the original fourth-best.

If in addition to the Ace, you hold both Queen and Jack, but not the King, you lead the Ace, irrespective of the number of cards in the suit.

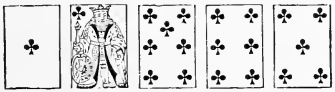
The second lead from this combination is the queen if there are only three or four cards in the suit; the Jack if there are more than four.

1 2

To the partner, the ace shows at least five cards in the suit, or the presence of both queen and jack.

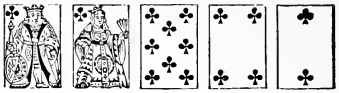
Unless it is trumped, the card following it will show what combination the ace was led from. The lead of an ace always denies the king.

THE KING. Holding the King, accompanied by both the cards next in value above and below, or by either of them, you lead the King. The second lead varies with the combination held.



2 1

From this the second lead is the ace, in conformity with the rule to play the best card of the suit on the second round, if you hold it.



From this, if the king wins, the fourth-best is led on the second round, as partner may be counted for the ace.

From this the second lead is the queen. Partner knows you have the ace if your king wins.

From this the Jack is led on the second round, to show partner it is as good as the ace, which he knows you have.

Holding three honors other than the ace, but only four cards in suit, the king is led.

1 2

If the king wins, it should be followed by the jack if there are four cards in the suit, by the queen if there are only three. Many players assume partner to have ace, and follow the king with a small card. This is condemned by every writer on the game.

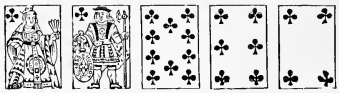
If the ace wins the king, partner knows you have led from king, queen; or king, queen, jack. The same is true if he has the ace himself when you lead a king. If he has not the ace, the card with which you follow the king will tell him what combination you hold.

The king is the most frequently led of the high cards; the ace next.

We come now to the leads of the queen and jack, which require particular attention, since it is very important to decide whether they are led from long or short suits.

THE QUEEN. When your suit is headed by the Queen and the two cards next in value below it, the Jack and Ten, you lead the Queen.

1 2



1 2

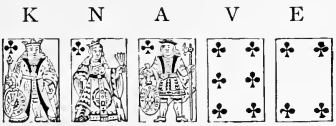
If the queen wins, partner should have the ace, he may even have both ace and king; but the king may be on your left and the ace beyond. In either case your next lead is the jack if you have only four cards in the suit; the ten if you have five or more. If you follow the queen with a small card, your partner's ace is forced, and if the king is in second hand, it is freed. If the second player held up the ace, and your partner has the king, your second lead makes no difference, but you should follow a uniform system.

The lead of the queen shows partner both jack and ten, and denies both ace and king.

THE JACK. Holding the Jack, and the next two cards in value above it, the King and Queen, with five or more in suit, you lead the Jack.

2 1

Whether the jack wins or loses, your second lead is the king, if you hold exactly five cards in the suit; the queen if six or more. The jack is led from this combination instead of the king, because its numerical strength is such that it is important that partner should not block the suit. The beginner is apt to find this distinction a little confusing. In Foster's "Whist Manual," my indebtedness to which I gladly acknowledge, an ingenious method is given for remembering which card to lead. When you hold this particular combination, king-queen-jack, and just enough cards in the suit to spell the word K-I-N-G, you lead the king. When you hold enough, or more than enough to spell the word K-N-A-V-E you lead the knave.



The lead of the jack shows the partner that you have both king and queen, and at least five cards in the suit. It absolutely denies the ace, which is important.

THE TEN.—Holding the minor tenace, King, Jack, accompanied by the Ten, you lead the Ten.

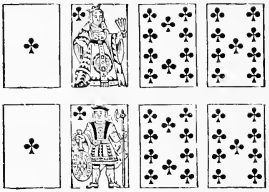
I

There is so little likelihood of the ten winning, that the second lead must depend on the fall of the cards to the first round.

This lead is gradually falling into disuse, the fourth-best being led from this combination. This is owing to the fact that the second hand holding ace, queen, can finesse with certainty, and that the position of the minor tenace is so clearly exposed to the adversaries.

The Ten shows partner that the leader holds both king and jack.

THE NINE.—The Nine is led from two combinations only.

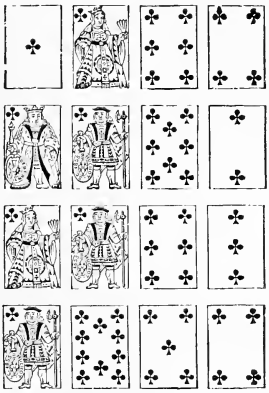


If another card is added to either of these, they become ace leads, owing to the number in suit.

A short-suit player avoids leading from these combinations, because they contain the major and a vice-tenace.

THE FOURTH-BEST.—All other leads are usually classed under one head; the lead of the original Fourth-best, when there is no high-card combination in the suit.

For instance :—

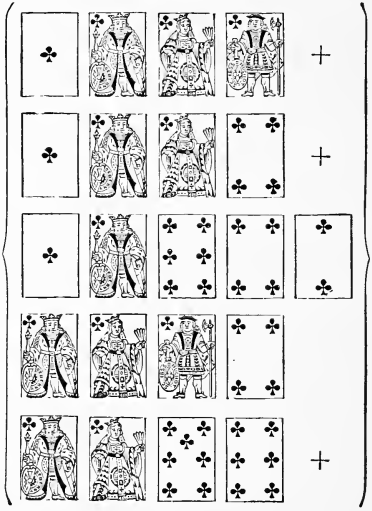


The foregoing constitute the conventional leads in plain suits that are best adapted to our purpose. The system here given is that followed by nine-tenths of the general run of players, as well as by many of the most expert. It is of the greatest importance that anyone about to take up the short-suit game should thoroughly understand this system of leading, and

should practice it exclusively. Upon this condition depends his partner's ability to detect any departure from it as a short-suit lead.

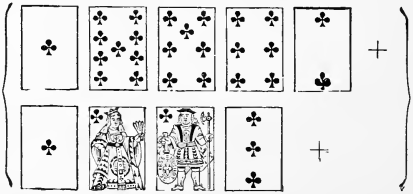
So important is this that I give in groups the various combinations of high cards, from which certain high cards should be led. The exact denomination of the small cards is unimportant.

From



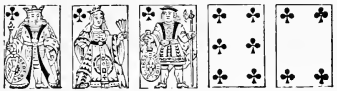
Lead the KING.

From

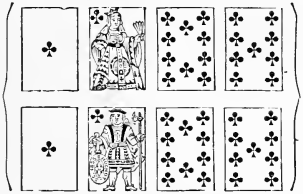


Lead the ACE.

From + Lead the QUEEN.

From  + Lead the JACK.

From + Lead the TEN.

From  Lead the NINE.

From all other combinations lead the FOURTH-BEST.

The leads from high-card combinations apply to three-card suits as well as to suits of four or more. If a suit of three cards contains no high-card combination, it is usual to lead the highest card, unless it is an ace, king, or queen. If it contains one of these cards, lead lowest of the suit.

Trump Leads.—Although short-suit leads are never made in trumps, the system of leading trumps should be thoroughly understood, as it varies somewhat from plain-suit leads.

With a winning sequence, the lowest of it is usually led, as it is needless to inform the opponents whether you or your partner holds the higher cards. The second lead is the next higher of the sequence.

2 1

2 1

2 1

When you have only the ace and king to lead as winning cards, your lead must be determined by your object. If you want to insure two or three rounds of trumps, begin with the king ; otherwise you may lead your fourth-best, and give your partner a chance to win the first round. It is often an advantage to win the third round yourself, which you must do if you lead the fourth-best.

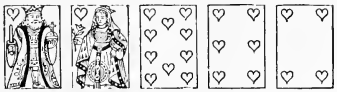
1

The fourth-best should always be led from this combination:—

I

It is useless to waste your king forcing out the ace, because you run no risk of losing your high cards, as you would if this were a plain suit.

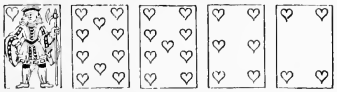
An exception is made when you have also the ten ;



I

To prevent both ace and jack, or even ace and nine winning against you, it is best to lead the king. If it forces the ace, the fall of the cards may direct you whether or not to finesse against the jack.

Another variation in the trump leads is this combination:—



I

The jack is lead from this sequence, instead of the fourth-best. The object is to coax second hand to cover, and the hope is that partner can kill the covering

card. If this occurs, the command of the trump suit is left in your hands on the third round.

From all other combinations, trumps are led the same as plain suits.

In the chapter on "Suggestions" will be found some opinions of my own on the subject of leading trump singletons, which would be out of place here.

We may now turn our attention to the departures from the regular long-suit system of leading, and examine in detail the system of leading from short-suits.

SHORT-SUIT LEADS.

Technically speaking, a long suit is one of four or more cards; a short suit is one of three cards or less. From the point of view taken in these pages, a short suit *par excellence* is one of two cards only.

We have seen that when a three-card suit contains one of the regular combinations, the orthodox long-suit lead is made. If forced to open a suit from which no conventional lead can be made, it should be treated as a short suit, and led from as such. We will first discuss the various short-suit leads separately, and then give them in tabulated form.

Ace king alone.—With these two cards it is evident that nothing is to be gained by leading either of them. As both would probably win, you would have to decide upon some other suit for the third round. It is therefore better to begin with another suit, keeping the ace-king suit for purposes of re-entry, in which capacity it may prove of inestimable value if you find yourself later in the hand with two or three cards that at the start were comparatively worthless, but have been established by the fall of other cards. Irrespective of that important consideration, it is always desirable to retain command of the long suits of your opponents as long as possible, and this ace and king

may prove to command their suit. Hence, do not lead from ace-king alone.

Ace queen alone.—These cards forming the major tenace, you will, of course, lead neither of them.

Ace jack alone.—These cards, and ace ten, are best led up to; so that with such combinations you should select some other suit. If your hand is so constituted that you cannot avoid playing one of these, as when you hold tenace in all three of the other suits, lead the lower card, the jack or ten; not the ace.

Ace and one small.—With the ace and any other card from the 9 to the 2, always lead the small card if you must lead the suit at all. As already stated, it is best to keep commanding cards. If you lead the ace, your opponents will throw off their smallest cards; but if you wait for some one else to lead the suit you will probably catch a king or queen, and so derive full benefit from the purchasing power, so to speak, of your ace. This last consideration I have emphasized time and again as the keynote of tenace.

King queen alone.—With these, lead the king, for with the royal couple you can afford to force out the ace at the sacrifice of his majesty, since you are left in command with the queen as a card of re-entry, and at the same time have thrown the lead.

King and one small.—With these you should lead some other suit in conformity with the principle that with the second-best only once guarded it is safer to let some one else lead the suit. To lead the

singly guarded king is simply to bid for his destruction, since you expose him to the onslaught of both opponents, either of whom may have the ace. On the contrary, if your left-hand adversary opens the suit, you are sure of making the king, and if either of the other players leads the suit the danger to your king is at least reduced one-half. If you cannot avoid leading the suit, perhaps holding tenace in all the others, lead the smaller card, just as with ace and one small.

In all other cases, ***lead the higher of two cards.*** For instance:—

Queen and one other.—No matter what the lower card may be, lead the queen.

Jack and one other—Lead the jack.

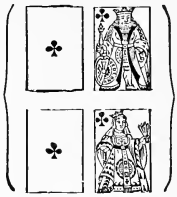
Ten and one other.—Lead the ten.

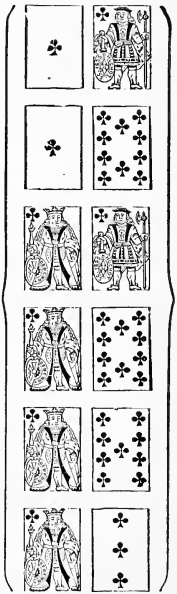
Nine and one other.—Lead the nine.

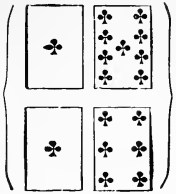
Two small cards.—With any two cards lower than the nine, some other suit should be selected for the opening lead, as partner will find it very difficult to read the lead correctly. In desperate cases you may go as low as a seven, or perhaps even a six, provided you adhere strictly to the rule of leading always the higher card. It is for partner's benefit that you should do this, for although there may seem no difference between the lead of a six and a seven, those being the only cards in the suit, the lead of the higher may enable him to understand the situation; the lead of the lower card would render it impossible for him to do so.

Rules which will often enable him to detect that these small cards are led from short suits will be given in the next chapter.

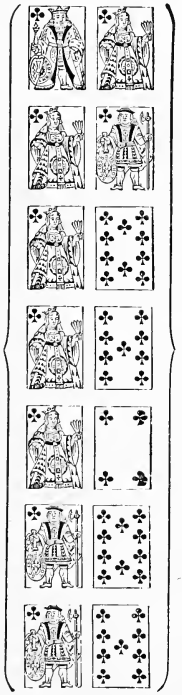
To recapitulate :—

Holding  Lead some other suit.

Holding  Usually, lead some other suit. If you cannot, lead the smaller card.

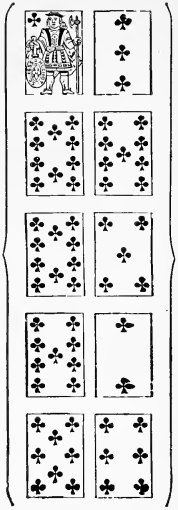
Holding 

Lead the small card if you must lead the suit.

Holding 

Lead the Higher of the two cards, if you must lead the suit.

Holding



Lead the Higher of the two cards, if you must lead the suit.

Singletons.—In considering the lead of single cards the ace must be left out of the question, as it is always best to hold it as a card of re-entry, and also because another suit would have to be led immediately, as the ace would almost invariably win the trick. The chance of catching a king or queen by waiting is another consideration. The king, as a general rule, I would not lead, for the best chance of winning with a lone king is when some one else leads the suit. This advice, however, is far from being positive, for it must be borne in mind that even when another player leads the suit you are not sure of a trick with the king ; the odds, in fact, being against it. But your hand may be

so constituted that it is better to set the king out of the consideration at once, preferring to lose him and have done with it, rather than break tenaces or lead trumps.

A solus, or only once guarded queen, on the other hand, is more likely to win when led than when played in following suit. Hence, having decided that a singleton is the proper play, you can ***lead any singleton lower than a king.*** The whole question hinges upon the advisability of making the lead at all. In deciding upon it, some discrimination must be exercised; but if a singleton is to be led at all, the denomination of it, so that it is lower than a king, does not matter.

DETECTING SHORT-SUIT LEADS.

Having indicated the various short-suit leads, it remains as a final preliminary to the actual study of the play of the game, to investigate the means by which the partner gathers the extremely important information that the lead is from a short or weak suit, and not from a long or strong one. In the first place, a thorough familiarity with the conventional long-suit leads is indispensable. In order to refresh the memory for this part of the subject they may be briefly repeated here.

The ace is led from A Q J with or without smaller cards, and from ace and four or more small cards.

The king is led from A K Q J ; A K Q ; A K ; and K Q, at the head of any number of smaller cards ; and from K Q J and only one small card.

The queen is led from Q J 10, with or without small cards.

The jack is led from K Q J and at least two small cards.

The ten is led from K J 10, with or without small cards.

The nine is led only from A Q 10 9, or A J 10 9.

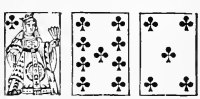
The original fourth-best is led in all other cases.

It will be observed that the card led always proclaims the presence in the leader's hand of certain other cards. These will be found in the chapter on Conventional Leads. When the partner sees that any one of these cards, which should be in the leader's hand, is held by another player, he will know that the lead is irregular, and may safely assume that it is from a short suit. If the partner is familiar with the conventional leads he will derive the evidence of a short-suit lead from the fall of the cards, instinctively, and without conscious effort. A few examples of this may be examined with profit.

The ace, as we have seen, is never included in the short-suit leads, and so does not concern us here. The original lead of an ace should always announce a long suit.

The king.—This card is the most frequently led from long suits, and the least often from short. Hence, with regard to it we reverse the process of reasoning applied to all other leads, and argue from the short suit to the long. The king is never led from a short suit unless it is accompanied by the queen ; therefore :—

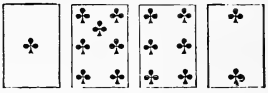
If partner leads a king, he has led from a long suit if you hold the queen, or if either of the opponents play it. For example :

Partner leads and you hold 

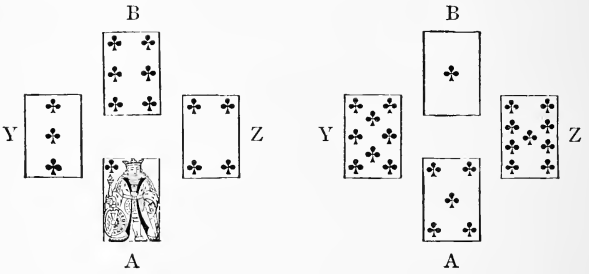
You know at once that the lead is from a long suit.

When the king is led from a short suit, the second lead is always the queen; therefore :—

If partner leads king, and on its winning follows with any card other than the queen, if you hold the ace, he has led from a long suit. For example :—

You hold :— 

The cards to the first two tricks fall :—



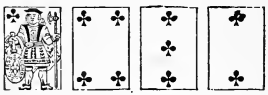
When partner continues with the 5, you know at once that clubs is his long suit, because he follows the king with the fourth-best, and not with the queen.

If you have neither ace nor queen, and the opponents win your partner's king, it may be some time before he gets another lead, and in the meantime you cannot tell whether he led from a long or a short suit. That need not deter you from returning the suit if you wish to do so, for you know he has at least the queen,

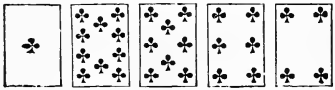
and can win the trick. Moreover, the instances are very rare in which a king will be led from a short suit.

The queen.—The long-suit lead of a queen always proclaims the presence of the jack and ten. (See Conventional Leads, the queen.) Therefore :—

If partner leads a queen he has led from a short suit if you hold, or either of your opponents play, the jack or the ten of the same suit. For example :—

Partner leads and you hold 

You know the minute the queen touches the table that it is a short-suit lead. Again :—

Partner leads and you hold 

You know the queen is a short-suit lead.

If these two cards fall to the first trick :—

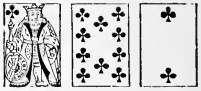
Y

A

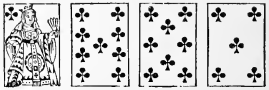
You know instantly, without looking at your own hand that the queen has been led from a short suit.

The jack.—The long-suit lead of a jack proclaims both king and queen. (See Conventionl Leads, the jack.) Therefore :—

If partner leads jack he has led from a short suit if you hold, or your opponents play, either the king or queen. For example :—

Partner leads and you hold 

You immediately know this to be a short-suit lead. Again :

Partner leads and you hold 

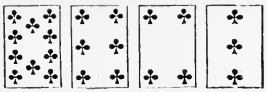
In this case the queen, in your hand, proclaims the jack to be a short-suit lead.

The first two cards fall thus :—

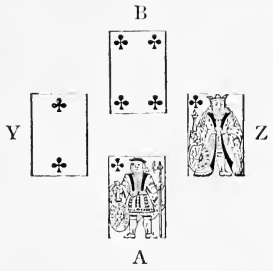
Y

A

Without looking at your own hand, you know the jack is a short-suit lead.

You are B and hold 

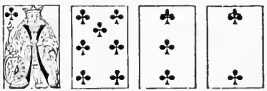
The cards to the first trick fall :—



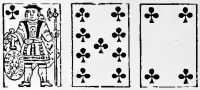
The fall of the king marks the lead as from a short suit.

The ten.—The long-suit lead of the ten proclaims both king and jack. (See Conventional Leads, the ten.) Therefore :—

If partner leads a ten he has led from a short suit if you hold, or your opponents play, either the king or jack of that suit. For example :—

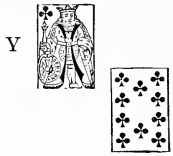
Partner leads and you hold 

Holding the king, you know it is a short-suit lead.

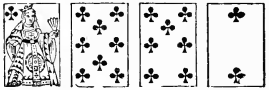
Partner leads and you hold 

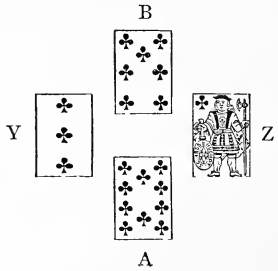
Here the jack in your hand marks the lead as from a short suit.

The first two cards fall thus :—



The fall of the king from Y shows that A has led from a short suit :

You hold  and the cards fall :



If the ten is a long-suit lead, the only card that can take it is the ace, which would also take your queen. If it is a short-suit lead, your best play is to hold your still doubly guarded queen, playing the seven to unblock, in case the suit is long. When Z wins with the jack you know the ten has been led from a short suit, and that, although both ace and king are against you, your partner will probably trump the third round.

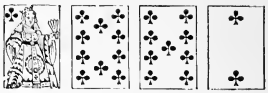
The Nine.—As the short-suit player is advised never to lead from the double major tenace, or from the vice tenace, ace jack, the lead of a nine may be assumed as invariably from a short suit.

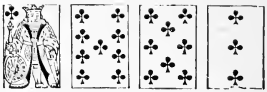
Small Cards.—When cards below the nine are led it is sometimes very difficult to detect them as from a short suit. Partner may have tenace in all the other suits; or he may have no strengthening cards to lead.

For such cases there are rules that may assist you in deciding on the nature of the lead, even though the card led is much below a nine. These rules are founded on the fact that you cannot hold three cards higher than the ten; or three cards lower than the ace and higher than the nine; or three higher than the nine and exclusive of the queen and jack, without having a combination from which a conventional high-card lead should be made.

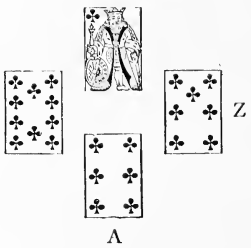
Short-suit players are indebted to Dr. Bond Stowe for these rules, which were first published in "Foster's Whist Manual." The third rule, which is the least important, I have ventured to change a little in the wording, although the principle remains the same.

1.—If you can locate all the cards from the one led to the TEN inclusive, it is a short-suit lead. Example:—

Partner leads and you hold 

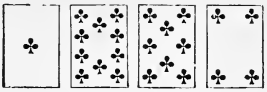
Again: You are B and hold 

The cards to the first trick fall:—

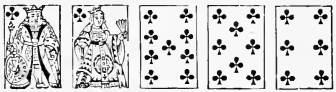


In each of these instances you are able to locate the cards from the one led to the ten inclusive, and know that they are both short-suit leads.

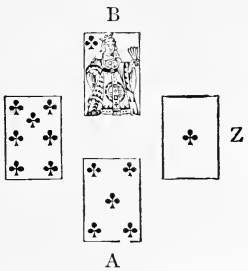
2.—If you can locate all the cards from the one led to the NINE inclusive, and can also account for the ACE, it is a short-suit lead.

Partner leads and you hold 

having in your own hand all the cards from the one led to the nine, inclusive, and also the ace, you know that the seven must have been led from a short suit. Again :—

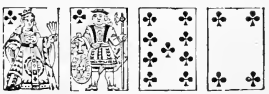
You are B and hold 

and the cards to the first trick fall :—

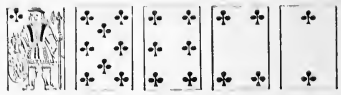


You can detect the five as a short-suit lead.

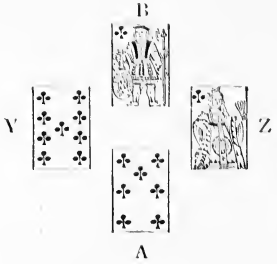
3.—If you can locate all the cards from the one led to the NINE inclusive, and can also account for both queen and jack, it is a short-suit lead. Example :—

Partner leads and you hold 

Here you have in your own hand all the cards from the one led to the nine, and also the queen and jack, so that the 8 must have been led from a short suit. Again :—

You are B and hold 

The cards to the first trick fall:—



All the cards from the seven to the nine, as well as the queen and jack are accounted for ; so you know the seven is a short-suit lead.

I introduce these rules for detecting the short-suit lead of small cards as a matter of course, since they belong to the subject under discussion; but the player must be wide awake to employ them to advantage. The difficulty increases as the face value of the card led decreases. For instance: You will frequently be able to recognize the 8 as short, while, except under

the most unusual circumstances, it will be impossible to read correctly the lead of a 4 or 3 from a short suit.

Learn the rules nevertheless, and always be prepared to use them. The positive knowledge that partner's original lead of a six or a seven is from a short suit may, on occasion, prove the salvation of your combined hands, and result in a great game and overwhelming triumph.

THE SHORT-SUIT GAME.

The long-suit whist player endeavors to bring about the most effective of trick-taking situations by getting out of his way all cards superior to those that he holds in his longest suit, exhausting trumps, and then securing the lead. He usually sacrifices everything to this laudable end, without discrimination. With it in view he commits himself to the lead of his strongest suit, regardless of its tenace possibilities ; to the lead of his longest suit, though it may be utterly lacking in strength ; and to the blind leading of trumps, when holding a given number, in the vague hope of finding his partner with a long-suit which may eventually be established and brought in. When he succeeds the reward is ample ; but in the majority of cases I think it will be found that he does not succeed, and failure means more than the mere want of success ; it means disaster. There are fifty-two cards in the pack, distributed among the players, and when one of these players has removed the trumps and made the road smooth and straight for the conquering march of established plain suit cards, he may discover that his own are not so established, and that he has simply placed his opponents in the position that he hoped to occupy himself.

The short-suit player, however, declines to be tied down to one line of play. He fully realizes the value of establishing a long suit, but does not vainly strive for its accomplishment when there is little likelihood of success. He preserves and profits by his tenaces, both in plain suits and in trumps; which, while recognizing the special features of the trumps, enables him to utilize their trick-taking possibilities to the utmost, instead of regarding them merely as ambushed highwaymen, or devoting them to a sort of Kilkenny cat mutual extermination. Not that the short-suit player is opposed to leading trumps when the occasion calls for it; for the natural tendency of his game is to establish medium cards that at the outset were comparatively valueless; and when such establishment has taken place, he is quick enough to lead trumps, though from only one or two.

The fundamental principle and ruling motive of the short-suit game can be given in one sentence. I do not find this principle embodied in any of the works on whist that I have read, although it is the essence of all whist.

Every card, individually, is more valuable when led up to than when led.

Ninety-nine times out of a hundred you get more for your money by keeping this principle in view. When you lead an ace, you gather in a crop of deuces and treys; when you play it fourth hand, you capture a king or a queen. Of course there are occasions when you have a group or sequence of high cards, and their

value lies in their being led; but in such cases each card partakes of the importance of the whole combination, which gives it an advantage not possessed by it individually. With isolated high cards the above maxim is strictly true, and if the reader will resolve always to bear it in mind, he will at once strengthen his game at least ten per cent.

The long-suit player recognizes this principle as far as tenace is concerned, perhaps; but there he lets the matter drop. The short-suit player applies it to all phases of the game.

Let us take a simple illustration :—

Strictly speaking, this is a long suit, and contains a conventional high-card lead. But the short-suit player argues after this fashion : If I lead the king and force the ace, I can afterwards lead the queen with the certainty of a trick, bar trumping. But that will be the only trick I can count on, for the opponents may hold jack and ten, in which case my nine and deuce will be worthless. On the other hand, if I wait, and the player on my left leads the suit, I am sure of two tricks, bar trumping; and if I continue to wait, and others lead the suit, I may make my nine good by catching the jack and ten; making three tricks in the suit, instead of one.

The same reasoning may be applied to another high-card long-suit lead.

If the ten is led, it may fall a victim to the queen, rendering the lead of the jack or king necessary to force out the ace on the next round, leaving the leader but one probable trick in the suit. If some other player leads the suit, and the ace appears, the four can be played to the trick. The king may afterwards catch the queen, leaving the jack and ten established.

It has lately become the practice among long-suit players to lead the fourth-best from this combination, on the chance that partner has an honor, and can win the first trick, or establish the suit.

While it will be only once in three times that the lead will come from your left-hand opponent, your chances are still improved by not leading the suit at all; for whether your partner or your right-hand adversary leads it, only one adversary plays after you, and that makes your chances twice as good as when both follow you.

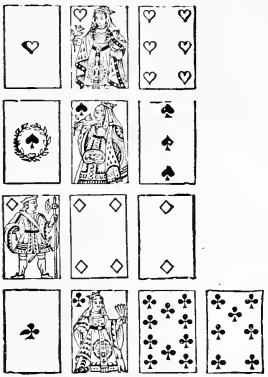
These dilatory tactics must not be carried so far that you may lose the opportunity to make one trick by waiting to make three. Everything depends on the hand, and the player must use his discretion. In the beginning of the hand we may assume that the short-

suit player's policy, with only moderate strength, is to wait, which he does by leading from his weakest suit. This will either win a trick with a medium card, or will throw the lead. The cards that should be led from such weak suits have already been indicated. Our next step will be the consideration of the conditions under which it is best to make these short-suit leads, and I know of no better way than the discussion of illustrated hands.

THE LEADER.

Let us take a number of hands, casually selected from a thousand or more recorded for the purpose, and analyse them from the original leader's point of view. Hearts are trumps in every instance.

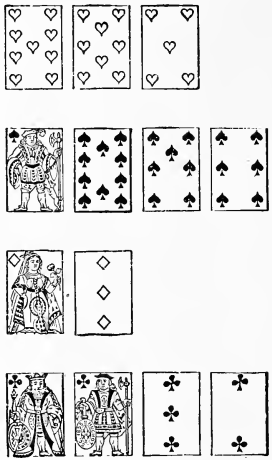
No. 23.



This is apparently so simple as hardly to require notice. You hold major tenace in two suits, and double tenace in the third, and cannot fail to be more benefited if they are led up to you than if you lead away from them. The long-suit lead would be the club 7; but you should not hesitate to lead the dia-

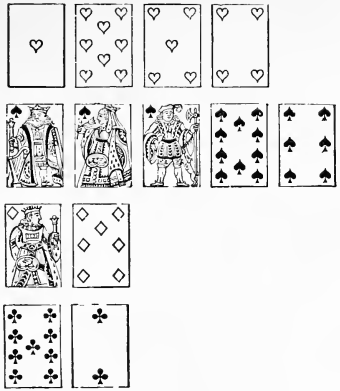
mond J. As a general rule, this would not be regarded as a good short-suit lead, because there are three cards in the suit, and therefore no hope for a ruff. But with a hand like this you can only hope to have your tenaces led up to by throwing the lead in the short suit.

No. 24.



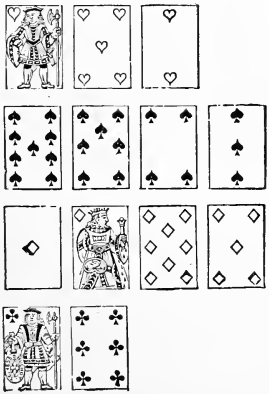
Here you have two technically long suits, neither of them intrinsically or numerically strong. One of them contains the minor tenace, which we know is best led up to. The long-suit lead would be the spade 6 or the club 2; but I think there can be no question that the diamond Q is better than either.

No. 25.



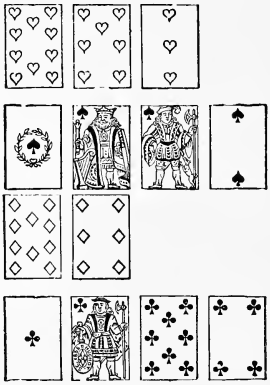
With this hand I would adopt the long-suit game, leading the spade J to force the ace, and to show partner the suit. On getting into the lead again, or if the jack wins, the trump should be led.

No. 26.



Here the diamond suit is not very strong, but by leading it you avoid any waste of medium cards in the uncertain effort to increase the value of low ones, and you give partner a chance to signal, if he wishes to do so. If the ace and king both win, you can lead the short suit if nothing better offers, thus utilizing both systems.

No. 27.



In the chapter on "Finesse," reference was made to the A K J finesse. This hand offers an opportunity to try it, making both the long and short-suit leads at the same time. Lead the spade king, and follow it with the diamond ten. The change of suit will show partner that you have a finesse in spades, and he will lead the queen if he has it, or will lead trumps to defend the established suit. If he returns a small spade, the finesse is left to your judgment. The long-

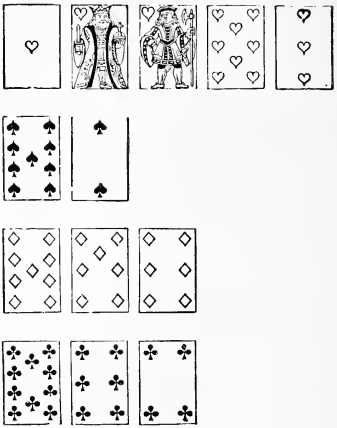
suit player would begin with the small club, keeping the spade suit for re-entry ; but the short-suiter would prefer the line of play indicated, because the club suit contains a vice tenace, which is better led up to.

The standard works on whist advise beginners always to lead trumps from five or more ; but I cannot subscribe to this, for I am convinced that such a course brings about more loss than gain. I cannot see why even a beginner should not give himself more latitude, and say : "When I hold six or more trumps, I will always lead them; but with five or less I will try to exercise a little discretion, as I do with every card I play." I quite appreciate the force of the argument that partner must be considered, and that the fact that you are weak in plain suits renders it likely that he is strong ; but still I maintain that it is best to wait for some indication from him that he is strong, instead of taking it on trust. As the old darkey said of the white folks, whist "is mighty unsartin," and it seems to me that some discrimination might be allowed in leading trumps from five. With six trumps, I think a player is strong enough to lead them, regardless of partner's holding in the plain suits.

The short-suit player fully recognizes the special value of trumps, both for ruffing and for defending long suits ; but in addition he tries to play them with a view to taking as many tricks as possible in the trump suit itself, instead of using the trumps merely as so many corkscrews to draw their fellows, no matter how, so that they are all taken out.

The A K J finesse in the trump suit is a case in point, which is illustrated in the following diagram : —

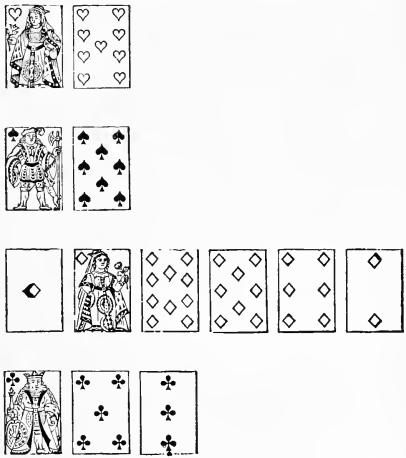
No. 28.



With this hand, to lead trumps for the sole purpose of exhausting them could only result in loss as far as the leader is concerned. It is true that partner may be strong in the plain suits ; but you don't know that he is ; and until assured of the fact it might be better to lead the short spade suit, even with no other object than the probable ruff on the third round. But the opportunity to gain an extra trick in the trump suit itself is too promising to be ignored, and if you follow the lead of the heart king by that of the spade 9, your

partner will know that you have a finesse in the trump suit. The long-suit player would probably blaze away with the ace and king of trumps, and after losing a trick to the queen find that he has exhausted trumps for the benefit of a powerful spade suit in the hands of the adversaries.

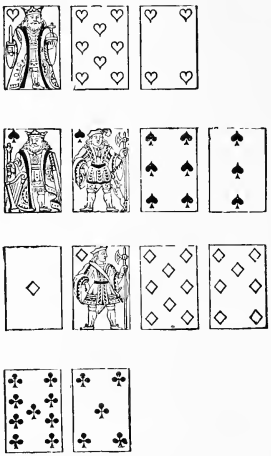
No. 29.



Here your long suit contains a quadruple tenace, but you have no other strength in the hand, and are offered a good short-suit lead with the spade jack. Nevertheless, the diamond suit is so long that there is

little chance of your deriving any benefit from its tenaces, as the suit may not go round more than once. The best play is to lead the diamond ace, and if it is not trumped, to follow it with the fourth-best.

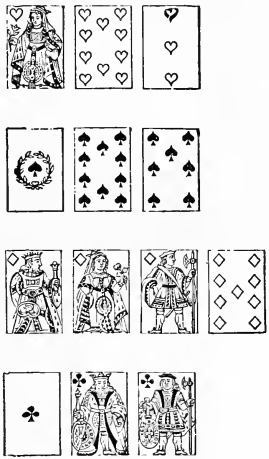
No. 30.



This is another simple hand. Neither of the four-card suits can be called strong, although one contains a minor and the other a vice tenace; both of which are combinations which are best led up to. The club 9 is the best lead. If either adversary should hold K, Q, and others in diamonds, and lead the suit, you will

have an opportunity to play the Bath Coup, which will be discussed later on.

No. 31.

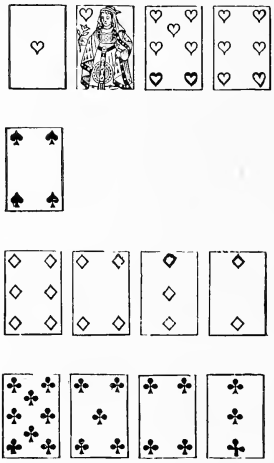


I have said that the short-suit player should have some additional reason for leading trumps from five than the mere fact of holding them. He should lead them boldly when the occasion calls for it, even if he has only two or three. With such a strong hand as the above it is best to exhaust the trumps as rapidly as possible. Some players would lead the small trump,

so as to win the third round ; while others would begin with the queen, hoping clubs or spades would be led up to them.

Now, let us be independent enough to make the acquaintance of the ostracised singleton lead.

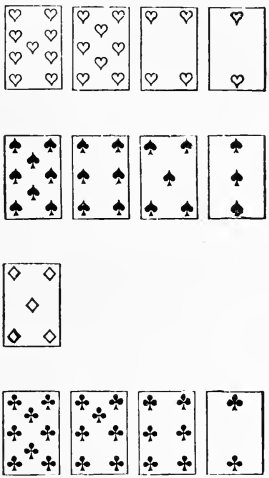
No. 32.



Here we have three long suits, and a singleton. The average long-suiter would probably lead the trump, as that is the strongest suit. Such a lead would give partner no warning that it was your only available lead, and he would naturally do all in his power to exhaust the trumps immediately.

The chief objection to the singleton lead is that it is liable to establish a great suit with the adversaries, who will exhaust the trumps. With this hand you are strong enough to run that risk, if risk it be. If the adversaries' spades are so strong that one round will establish them, they will probably play spades in any case, and your original lead of trumps would only be helping their game. I would recommend the singleton lead from this hand.

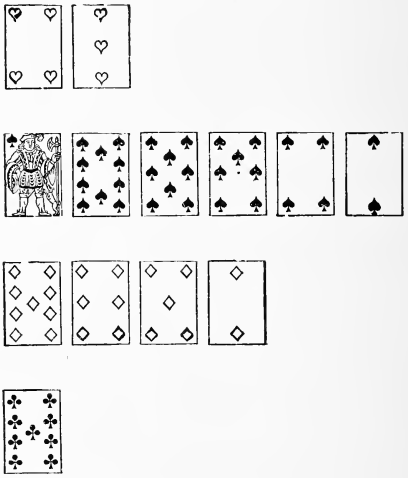
No. 33.



This it what is known as a "Yarborough," the odds against which are 1827 to 1, so that it is hardly worth

while to discuss it. I give it as an example of such weakness that you are warranted in taking any risks, and I would advise the lead of the diamond 5. The trumps are too weak to prevent the adversaries exhausting them; but I still think the singleton the best lead.

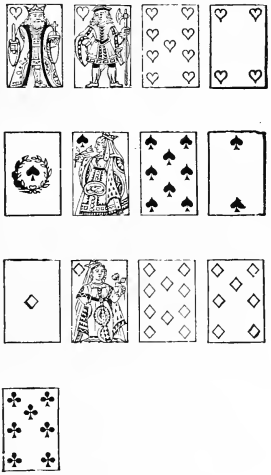
No. 34.



In such a hand as this, when the trumps are both numerically and intrinsically weak, I think the singleton is unsafe. The spade suit is the best defensive lead, on account of its length, and there is a bare chance

that your partner may put you in after the trumps are gone.

No. 35.



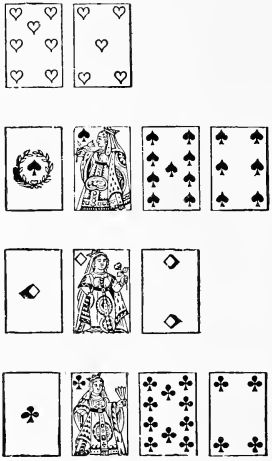
Quite a different reason prompts the singleton lead from this hand. In the foregoing examples you were so weak that the play for the ruff seemed your only chance. Here your strength lies in the suits that you want led up to, and the best chance to throw the lead is to play the singleton.

I have already stated that short-suit leads do not apply to trumps, because one of the principle reasons for leading two-card suits, the hope of a ruff, cannot

exist. But a short trump suit may be used for the same purpose as the singleton in the last example, to throw the lead when all the plain suits are better led up to.

For example:—

No. 36.

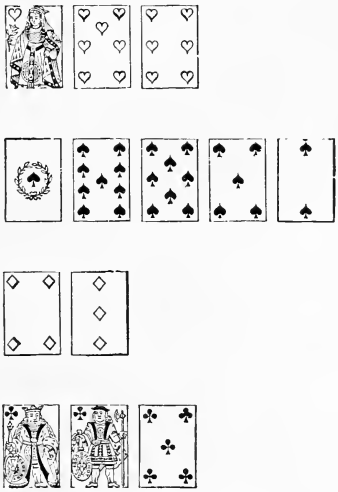


With this hand it is better to lead a trump than to break into the tenace suits. Under similar circumstances a trump singleton should be led, regardless of its value, although the books say the ace is the only permissible singleton lead in trumps. There are other occasions in which a singleton trump is the best lead,

but their discussion will be reserved for our chapter on "Suggestions."

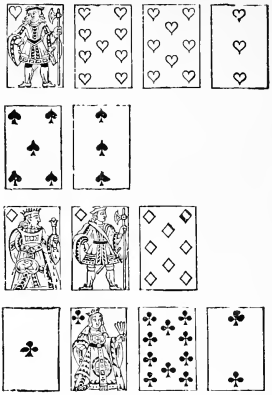
Some players urge that three tenace suits cannot all be made, which is quite true; but it is better not to guess at the one to break, if it can be avoided.

No. 37.



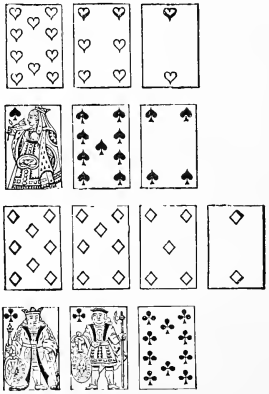
Here the spade suit is not strong, and the club suit would be better led up to, but the diamonds are too small for partner to understand such a lead. It is practically a long-suit hand, and I would lead the ace of spades, following with the fourth-best.

No. 38.



In this hand the short suit would be difficult for partner to understand as such, but both the other plain suits should be led up to, and you have trumps enough to risk the spade lead.

No. 39.



In this hand the longest suit is hopeless, and the doubly guarded queen stands a better chance if some other player leads the suit. The hand offers a good high-card lead with the club 10. If there was another card in the suit it would be better led up to, but with three only you have no small card to throw off on the ace, and as you must lose the ten, you might as well lead it.

But we cannot go on indefinitely giving examples. It is equally impossible to settle upon a positive standard by which every hand may be judged. In the prescription for the short-suit game; "Brains, *quantum suf.*" must replace the usual, "Rule of thumb, *ad lib.*," which is the principal ingredient in long-suit whist. The following may be called recommendations, instead of rules, for the guidance of the short-suit player.

First.—If you have a good short-suit lead, such as a two-card suit headed by a Q, J, 10, or 9, you should lead it unless your strongest suit is one of four cards exactly, and contains both ace and king; or king, queen, jack; or queen, jack, ten, nine; and is accompanied by a card of re-entry in another suit. This card of re-entry is imperative in every instance.

Second.—Lead your short suit if you have one, unless your strong suit is one of five cards exactly, and contains at least the ace, or some combination of two

honors, counting the ten as one; in either case with a card of re-entry in another suit.

Third.—Never lead from a suit of four cards or less if it contains the major or the minor tenace.

Fourth.—Never lead from a suit of five cards if it contains the double major tenace. If it contains the single major tenace do not lead it if you have any good short-suit lead.

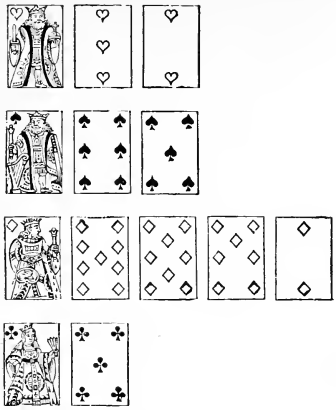
Fifth.—From any suit of six or more cards, make the long-suit lead.

Sixth.—Do not lead from five trumps just because you have so many; but lead from any number, even a singleton, if you have a reason for it; such as tenaces or good cards in all the plain suits.

With the exception of the last, I do not pretend to present these as imperative. They simply represent an effort to aid the beginner in deciding between the two schemes of play that are dependent on the original lead. They are by no means radical, as they lean rather to the long-suit game than to the short. Many bold short-suit players would demand in almost every instance greater strength than I have given as the minimum before they would undertake to establish a long suit.

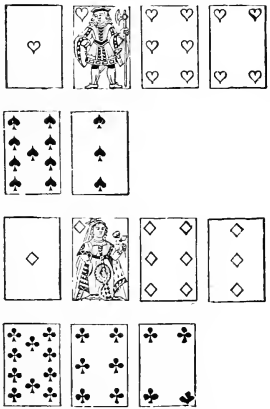
Now let us see if the foregoing principles are of any assistance in determining the proper lead from a few hands dealt at random.

No. 40.



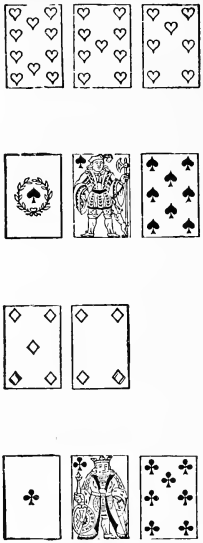
The long suit does not come up to the standard, the ace, or two honors; so you select the short suit, and lead the club queen. (See Rule 2.)

No. 41.



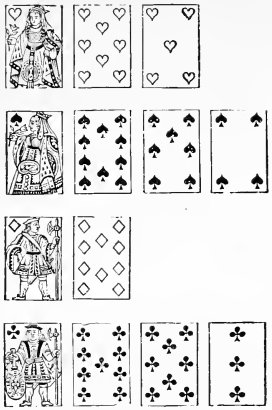
According to Rule 3, the diamonds are out of the question, as they contain the major tenace. The spade 9 is a good short-suit lead.

No. 42.



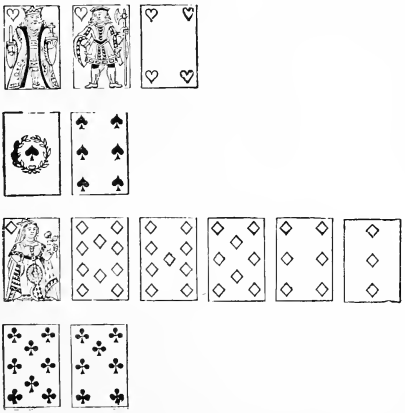
Here the club suit fulfils the conditions of Rule 1, and the re-entry card is in the spade suit. An additional reason for leading the king and ace of clubs, is that there is not a good short-suit lead in the hand,

No. 43.



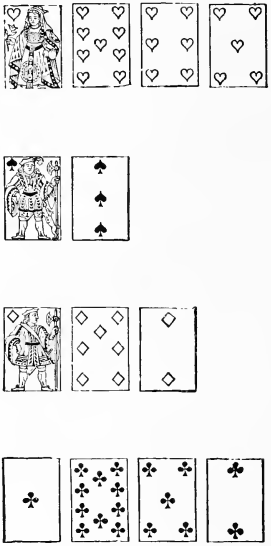
Neither of the four-card suits comes up to the provisions of Rule 1; but the hand offers a good short-suit lead in the diamond jack.

No. 44.



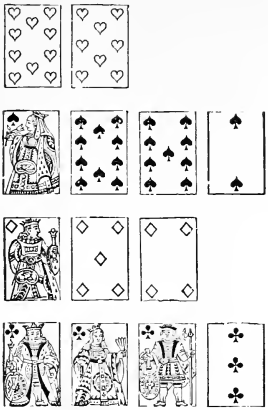
This hand comes under rule 5. There are six cards in the long suit, with a card of re-entry in spades, and no good short-suit lead. The fourth-best diamond is the best opening lead.

No. 45.



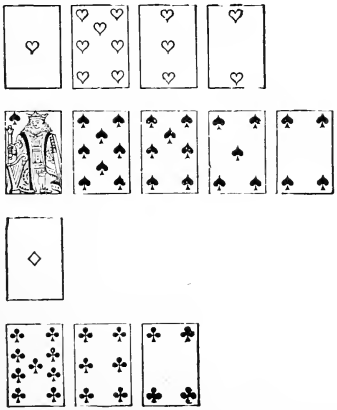
The long suit, four cards, does not fulfil the conditions of Rule 1, and there is no card of re-entry; while the spade jack offers a good short-suit lead.

No. 46.



The club suit fulfils the conditions of Rule 1, and there are cards of re-entry in both the other plain suits. Lead the club king.

No. 47.



This hand is an instance of choosing the lesser of two evils. The spades do not come up to the requirements of Rule 2, as they do not contain either the ace or two honors; but there is a good card of re-entry, and there is not a good short-suit lead. These considerations point to the lead of the fourth-best spade as the best play.

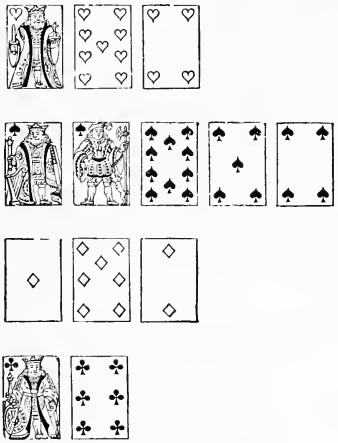
I am well aware that these recommendations or rules are far from perfect, for it is impossible in a few words to lay down definite directions that will cover every hand. The foregoing are simply an effort to formulate some sort of standard which will enable a player to decide between the long and the short-suit systems in the opening leads, which is something that no other writer, to my knowledge, has ever attempted.

At the first glance these rules may appear somewhat inconsistent in requiring so much more from suits of four cards than from those of five. In reality such is not the case, for the addition of the fifth card, however small, makes the suit much more valuable. With a four-card suit, the most favorable condition is to have the suit go round three times; but this leaves only one established card in the leader's hand. With a five-card suit, there is a good chance to establish two cards, which is no small matter in a close game. Therefore it naturally requires less intrinsic strength to place a five-card suit on a par with a four-card suit.

So far we have discussed the question of the lead only from the leader's point of view. But we must not lose sight of the fact that when you are not the

original leader the fall of the cards before your first lead may change the aspect of affairs to such an extent that a hand which would have called for a long-suit lead originally may no longer do so when you get into the lead, later in the hand. Two illustrations will suffice for this point.

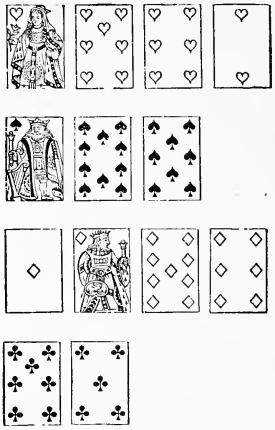
No. 48.



You are Y, and hold these cards. If it were your original lead you would play the long suit, because you have a five-card suit with three honors in it, and a card of re-entry in diamonds. But A leads spade 8. If this is his fourth-best your ten will win the trick, see Foster's Eleven Rule. Your spade suit is not so good as it was, for tenace is held over you on your

right, and you cannot lead the suit. Trumps are out of the question, and the singly guarded king must be led up to. The best lead is the smallest diamond.

No. 49.



In this example you are Z. If you were the original leader you should begin with the long suit, which comes within our first qualification, and is accompanied by the card of re-entry in spades; besides which there is no good short-suit lead. But A leads diamond 5; Y, plays 2; B, the Q, and you win with the K. Y cannot be signalling. If that were probable you might return the ace to allow him to complete a call; but in this case it is better to retain the command of the adverse suit as long as possible. The spade 8 is your best lead, unless you have a very good partner, who

can be trusted not to read such a card as the club 7 as led from strength.

In continuing short-suit leads, it is always desirable to follow up a strengthening card with another card of the same suit. If you lead a queen, and it wins, go on with the suit: so also if you lead a jack. But if you lead a ten or a nine, and it wins, you should consider the propriety of leading trumps, as your partner must be very strong in the suit you originally lead. Four trumps with an honor, or three with two honors should be led under such circumstances.

When you originally lead a short-suit you will frequently lose the trick; but the oponent will often have to play a disproportionately high card to win it, which will promote any intermediate cards in your partner's hand.

When your partner gets in, he will estimate his hand on the same principles that guide you; and if he leads you a short suit, you must finesse it judiciously, trusting that fourth hand will have to play some card that will promote those remaining in your hand.

This brings up the question of what constitutes judicious finessing by the third hand. To ascertain this we must first consider the play of the third hand on each lead that his partner might make, and then present the whole in tabulated form.

THE THIRD HAND.

Ace Led.—You can only play your smallest; unless you have four exactly; when you play third-best and keep the lowest.

King Led.—Play the next to the smallest when you have four exactly; the smallest with any other number. There are two exceptions with high cards: When you hold A J only, the play is the ace, for partner must have the queen, and the ace would block his suit, the jack will not. He can win the jack with the queen if he has the ten, otherwise he may pass it. The other exception is when you have only ace and one small; or ace and a number of others, and a very strong trump hand. It is best to win the king and exhaust the trumps, if you can trust your partner for a long suit.

Queen Led.—We have already seen that if you hold A Q yourself, your play is to finesse the queen. If the queen is led, and you hold ace third hand, your play is to finesse the queen if second hand does not cover it. Holding A K and others your play is a small card unless you have only one. If this small card, or the one played second hand, is such that you know the queen is a short-suit lead; you should pass; but otherwise you should play the king and return the

ace, so as not to block a long suit headed by Q J 10. Some judgment must be exercised in cases in which you are strong enough to win the trick and lead trumps.

Holding king and others, nothing can be gained by playing king on queen, unless the lead is from a long suit and you have only one small card with the king. If second hand held the ace, he would play it on the queen, and as it must be in fourth hand, there is only one situation in which you can lose by giving up the king if you have only one small card with it, and that is when the queen is a short-suit lead. The mere fact of your holding only two cards in the suit renders it unlikely that partner held but two also.

With the exceptions mentioned, it may be stated as a general rule that you should always pass a partner's queen, unless second hand covers, and you have ace.

Jack Led.—The long-suit lead of the jack is from K Q J and at least two others. (See Conventional Leads, the Jack.) If you have the ace and two or more small cards you should pass the jack. If it is from a long suit it will win. If not, it will force an honor, and still leave you in command of the suit. Holding ace and only one small, you should play the ace, so as not to block a possible long suit. Holding A K, or A Q, you should pass the jack, as you know it is a short-suit lead, and the finesse is against one card only.

Holding king and one or more small, you know the jack is from a short suit, and pass it. Although the finesse is against two cards it is your best chance, for the ace may be in fourth hand and the queen on your

right. If both are on your left you will lose, no matter what you play. If queen is on your left and ace on your right, your king should be good for the third round. If second hand covers you must cover him with your K.

Ten Led.—The long-suit lead of the ten is from K J 10 and others. (See Conventional Leads, the Ten.) If you hold ace and others, the conventional play is the ace, leaving the finesse to the original leader on the return. Holding A K and one small the ten must be a short-suit lead, and you must play the king to save a trick that would otherwise certainly be lost. With A Q and others the lead may be taken for a long suit, and passed ; but with A Q alone the ace must be played, so as not to block the suit. With A Q and only one other, the ace must be played on the second round for the same reason. If the ten turns out to be a short-suit lead, nothing is lost by passing it, as you remain in command with the two best cards if the king falls ; if the jack wins it, you have tenace over the king. With A J you should pass the ten, although you know it is a short-suit lead, for you will be left with the major tenace.

With king and others, or K Q and others, you should finesse the ten. As a general rule, you should never cover a high card led by your partner with a card only one remove above it ; such as ace on queen, king on jack, or queen on ten. With such a combination as K J x, the king is only one remove above the ten, and you should pass.

Holding queen and any number of small cards, you assume the ten to be led from a long suit, and pass it, as your queen cannot block your partner's suit while he holds the king. If second hand covers with the jack, you must play the queen.

Nine Led.—As I have advised never leading from combinations in which the nine would be fourth-best, it may be assumed that the nine is always from a short suit. It is too small a card to prove strengthening, or to win the trick; so with A J, or ace and others, the ace should be put on. With A K or A K Q the nine should be covered. With A K J or A Q J, the nine should be treated as a small card, and the jack finessed. Similarly with A Q. With A J 10 you can afford to pass the nine. With king and only one other card, you should play the king. With K Q play the queen, which will either win the trick or force the ace. With K J and others, finesse the jack against A Q being both on your left. For the same reason, pass with K J 10.

Holding queen and others, pass the nine; but with queen and only one other, it must be covered. With Q J and others you should pass.

With jack and others the nine should be passed; with jack and only one other it must be covered.

Small Cards Led.—If anything smaller than a nine is led, you should play to win the trick, being guided by the principles of finesse whenever opportunity offers.

If the finesse is against one card only, it should gen-

erally be made. Holding A Q + play the queen; with A K J + or A Q J + play the jack.

If the finesse is against two intermediate honors, it should be made, for partner may be credited with one honor in the suit from which he leads, if it is a long suit. If you hold A J +, and cannot detect partner's lead of a small card as from a short suit, you should finesse the jack. If your partner has an honor in the suit the finesse is against one card only; if he has not, you are left with tenace in the suit.

Finessing by the eleven rule is another instance of a finesse against one card only. The following cases may serve as examples.

Eight led. Holding queen and any other card higher than the eight, pass it.

Seven led. Holding queen and two others higher, pass it.

Six led. Holding queen and three others higher, pass it.

This finesse is based on the principle that partner cannot have both ace and king, and that one of those cards must be the only one against him, so your queen will not be of any use if either ace or king is behind you in fourth hand.

In these directions for the play of the third hand, I have taken it for granted that the reader understands "passing" to mean playing a smaller card than the one led. When you hold four of the suit exactly, and do not attempt to win the trick, you should play your third-best, and on the next round your second-best,

keeping your smallest card until the last, so as not to risk blocking a long suit.

The subjoined table will assist in impressing the foregoing chapter on the mind, and may be found useful as a table of reference when any doubt arises as to the proper play for the third hand.

Combinations of all cards higher than the one led are omitted; so are those in which you can well afford to win partner's card. Such situations require no direction, no question of finesse being involved.

The x represents any card smaller than a 9; and the plus sign, +, one or more such cards.

TABLE OF THIRD-HAND PLAY or Partner's Original Lead.

When Partner Leads	If You Hold	You Should Play
Queen	A, K, +	K.
Queen	A, K, x, +	x.
Queen	A, x, +	x.
Queen	K, x,	K.
Queen	K, x, +	x.
Jack	A, x,	A.
Jack	A, x, +	x.
Jack	A, K, +	x.
Jack	A, Q, +	x.
Jack	K, +	x.
10	A, +	A.
10	A, K, +	K.
10	A, Q,	A.
10	A, Q, +	x.*
10	A, J, +	x.
10	K, Q, +	x.
10	K, J, +	x.
10	K, +	x.
10	Q, x,	Q.
10	Q, x, +	x.

* Play ace on second round, so as not to block the suit if you have only one small.

TABLE OF THIRD-HAND PLAY.—Continued.

When Partner Leads	If You Hold	You Should Play
9	A, +	A.
9	A, K, +	K.
9	A, Q, +	Q.
9	A, J, +	A.
9	A, K, J, +	J.†
9	A, Q, J, +	J.
9	A, Q, J, 10, +	x.
9	A, J, 10, +	x.
9	K, +	K.
9	K, 10, +	K.
9	K, Q, +	Q.
9	K, J, +	J.
9	K, J, 10, +	x.
9	Q, x,	Q.
9	Q, x, +	x.
9	Q, J, +	x.
9	J, x,	J.
9	J, x, +	x.
x	A, Q, +	Q.
x	A, K, J, +	J.
x	A, Q, J, +	J.‡
x	A, J, +	J.
x	A, J, 10, +	10.

† If strong in trumps; otherwise play the king.

‡ If you read partner's lead as from a long suit, play the ace.

Writers on whist usually advise deeper finesse in trumps than in plain suits, and you should bear this in mind when playing with a partner who strictly follows the long-suit system. You must finesse boldly in trumps when you have for a partner a player who leads trumps just because he has five, or because they are his only four-card suit.

When a short-suit partner leads trumps he either wants them out at once, or is throwing the lead to get his plain suits led up to. If you think the latter is the case, finesse in trumps to your heart's content; but if in doubt, do not finesse, not even with A, Q, but win the trick with the ace, and make sure of another round. Even if partner is only throwing the lead, he is strong enough in plain suits to have trumps come out.

If you have not the trump ace, finesse without hesitation. Play jack from K, J, +, or 10 from Q, 10 +. This applies to the original lead only. The fall of the cards and the consideration of "Obligatory finesse," govern cases that arise later in the hand.

We have seen that the short-suit player usually begins with the highest card of his weak suit, other than the ace or king. If you pass, and the card led wins, he goes on with the same suit, or leads trumps. On this second round you can play your best card, or finesse, as you think best. If you win the trick, or get into the lead later on, your own hand and the fall of the cards must determine your course. Your partner's original lead of a short suit by no means obliges you to lead another short suit in return. If your hand and the fall

of the cards are favorable to a long-suit lead, why make it by all means; for your partner is supposed to be as alert as you are, and will recognize your lead for what it is, and will presumably lend himself cheerfully to making the most of your cards.

If you conclude that the short-suit game is the best for your hand also, you will lead the highest of your weak suit, other than an ace or king. If your partner passes it, and it wins, you should go on with the next higher card of the same suit, and he will either win the trick or finesse, as he thinks best.

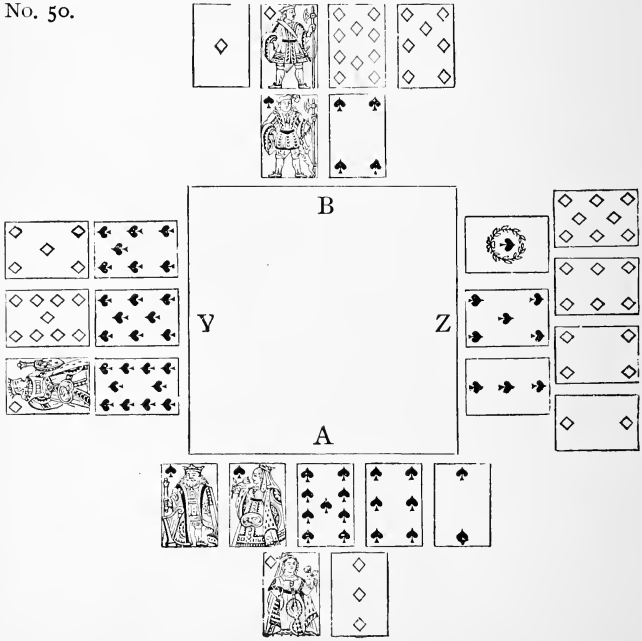
When each of you have made a short-suit lead you will frequently find that you and your partner hold certain cards of medium value in each other's suits that have been sensibly promoted, and which are much nearer to being the best of the suit than they were before the original lead, or than they usually would be after the same number of rounds in the long-suit game. This last point is worthy of particular attention.

If the fall of the cards should establish several of these intermediate cards, you can lead trumps with some assurance of successfully defending them if you have husbanded your strength in the other suits. In addition to the advantage of preserving tenaces, this promotion and establishment of intermediate cards is one of the great advantages of the short-suit game, and the aim of the player should be to combine the one with the other. Instead of leading from four or five-card suits containing tenaces or vice-tenaces, or regulation long-suit leads with nothing to back them up,

the short-suit player leads from his weakest suit. If this suit is headed by a Q, J, or 10, the chances are that the lead of the highest card will increase the value of all partner's cards in that suit. When he gets into the lead, he will promote your cards in some other suit in the same manner. If either of you have a card of re-entry in the third suit, with which to bring in these promoted cards, a lead of trumps may prove very effective.

The following diagram will illustrate the value of this method of leading strengthening cards.

No. 50.



Let us first suppose A and B to be long-suit players. The lead of the spade king will force the ace, and the queen will be good for the next trick; but after that Y will command the suit with the ten, unless B has a chance to lead the jack on the second round. If B leads a diamond, Y will kill A's queen, making a trick in the suit.

If A and B are short-suiters, A will lead the diamond queen, which Y must pass, allowing it to win the trick. A continues the suit, and B finesses the 10, winning every trick in diamonds by catching the king with his ace. B will then lead the spade jack. If Z passes, it wins the trick ; if he covers, he establishes the entire spade suit in A's hand.

The reader must not expect to find such opportunities as this in every hand ; but they are more frequent than would be imagined, and some cases offer even greater chances for gain than the example.

The gist of the whole matter lies in our golden first principle ; that all cards are more valuable when led up to than when led away from, or led through. The short-suit player holds back the suits of moderate strength, waiting to have them led up to; leading from his weakest suits, in which he has nothing to hope for.

THE SECOND HAND.

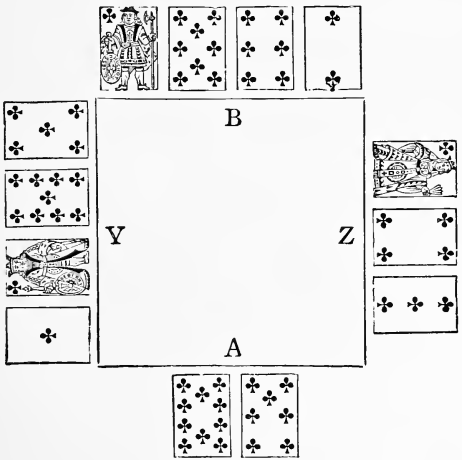
It is presumed that the reader is familiar with the general principles of second-hand play in the long-suit game; but they may be briefly summed up here for purposes of comparison.

When no attempt is made to win the trick the rule is to play the lowest card, unless the second hand wishes to signal for trumps. But when certain combinations of high cards are held, one of them must be played. With any three high cards in sequence, A K Q, K Q J, or Q J 10, the lowest of the sequence should be played. From A K or K Q and others, the lower of the high cards should be played second hand. From A Q J, or A J 10, the lowest of the high cards is played. From A Q 10, the 10 is always played in trumps, and in plain suits when strong in trumps; but the queen is the rule if weak in trumps. With short suits containing two high cards, such as Q J x, or J 10 x, the rule is to play the lower of the high cards second hand. With any three cards lower than the jack, the rule is to pass; but in the short-suit game you cover, if you can, whatever card is led. With any two cards immediately above and below the one led, which form what is called a fourchette, the card led must be covered, if it is higher than a 7. If you hold

J 9, and the 10 is led, play the J. With 10 8, play the 10 on a 9 led.

The short-suit player will find second-hand play a very important feature of the game. He must protect his partner in suits in which he knows the latter is weak, if the suit is led up to the weak hand, even though there is little or no chance to win the trick. The short-suit player must also cover supporting cards, even without fourchette, if there is any chance to promote medium cards by so doing.

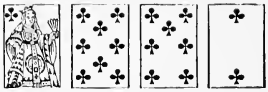
No. 51.



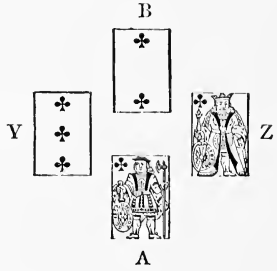
Let us suppose that A leads the club 10; Y covers with the king, and every one at the table knows the 10 is a short-suit lead. If Y is now foolish enough to

attempt to underplay you, who are B, by leading the 9 to A's declared weakness, you at once play in the jack from your fourchette, J 8, which are the cards immediately above and below the one led, the 10 being played. This will prevent Z from finessing the 9, and will make your 8 good for the last round of the suit.

You are B and hold these cards:



The first trick the cards fall:—



Y cannot hold the ace, or he would have covered the jack. Holding queen, you know the jack is from a short suit, and any attempt to unblock would be to play the adversaries' game. Should Y get into the lead later on, and play the club suit through you, you should pass any card but the ten; for Z will have to play his ace to shut out the possible ten in A's hand.

If Y leads the ten you must cover it, to make your eight the second best, and to prevent Z from finessing.

If the short suit is usually one of two cards only, it will not be often that the adversaries can profit by under-play, or by leading up to weakness, as the third round of the suit will be trumped; but if they resort to such tactics after the trumps are exhausted, you must be on the alert to protect yourself.

The general theory of the short-suit game having been explained, the reader may, with advantage, turn his attention to one of the best methods imaginable for impressing on the mind its principles by the illustration of their use in the progress of an actual game.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES.

The first game I have selected is for the purpose of showing the variation in the score possible at duplicate whist when a hand is opened with different original leads, such as those of the long and the short-suit systems. It is also a good example of what I maintain to be the fallacy of leading from five trumps for no better reason than that the leader holds that number.

The game is number 51 of the hundred that I have already mentioned as having tested. I cannot say what the result was in the original play, but as all the contestants were long-suit players, I have no doubt that they came out even, or with a difference of only a trick either way. Although there is nothing striking about the hand at the first glance, I soon realized its possibilities if played by two good short-suit partners against two of the long-suit persuasion.

Let us first examine it on the supposition that A and B are long-suit players, while their adversaries, Y and Z, follow the short-suit method.

Hearts are declared trumps. A is the original leader. The underlined card wins the trick, and the card under it is the next one led.

Game No. 1.— Original.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	♡ 6	♡ 5	♡ 3	♡ 9
2	Q ♢	K ♢	A ♢	J ♢
3	♡ 2	♡ A	♡ 4	♡ 10
4	4 ♢	10 ♢	3 ♢	2 ♢
5	♡ 7	9 ♢	5 ♢	7 ♢
6	K ♠	A ♠	6 ♠	5 ♠
7	♣ 8	♣ 2	♣ 3	♣ J
8	♡ K	4 ♠	6 ♢	♡ Q
9	Q ♠	7 ♠	J ♠	8 ♠
10	2 ♠	♣ 4	♣ 5	10 ♠
11	♡ 8	♣ Q	♣ 6	♡ J
12	3 ♠	♣ A	♣ 7	♣ K
13	9 ♠	8 ♢	♣ 10	♣ 9

The long-suit opening makes 4 tricks.

Trick 1. A has been taught always to lead trumps from five; so he begins with his fourth-best heart.

Trick 2. Z is a short-suit player, and wants his club tenace led up to if possible. Both his other suits being weak, he selects the one with the highest card, other than an ace or king, and leads it to his partner as a supporting card. A properly covers with the queen, which would gain a trick if the positions of the ace and king were reversed.

Trick 3. B has been taught that only sudden illness or having no trumps will excuse the failure to return partner's original lead of the trump suit.

Trick 4. Y continues the established diamond suit to force the strong trump hand.

Trick 6. As A cannot catch both Z's trumps, he must proceed to the establishment of the spades.

Trick 7. If Y continues diamonds, A will make both his trumps; so he is forced to open the club suit, beginning with the smallest card so as not to promote the minor tenace if it is in the adversaries' hands. Z finesses the jack, as Y's lead must be from a strong suit; the deuce not being a supporting card.

Trick 8. Z's play is now to prevent A from making both his trumps.

Now let us examine the overplay, in which A and B are short-suit players, while their adversaries, Y and Z, follow the long-suit system.

Game No. 1.— Overplayed.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	Q ♢	K ♢	A ♢	2 ♢
2	2 ♠	A ♠	J ♠	5 ♠
3	4 ♢	10 ♢	3 ♢	J ♢
4	♡ 2	♡ 5	♡ 3	♡ Q
5	♡ 6	♡ A	♡ 4	♡ J
6	♣ 8	♣ 2	♣ 3	♣ K
7	♡ 7	8 ♢	5 ♢	7 ♢
8	♡ K	4 ♠	6 ♢	♡ 9
9	K ♠	7 ♠	6 ♠	8 ♠
10	Q ♠	♣ 4	♣ 5	10 ♠
11	9 ♠	♣ Q	♣ 6	♡ 10
12	♡ 8	9 ♢	♣ 7	♣ J
13	3 ♠	♣ A	♣ 10	♣ 9

The short-suit opening makes 7 tricks.

Trick 1.—Having no reason to lead trumps, even with five, and not having three honors in his long suit, A prefers the good short-suit lead in diamonds. Although Y has not the fourchette, the cards he holds

below the king are strong enough to warrant him in forcing A-B to play two honors to win this trick. The fall of the cards leaves the jack the only card out against Y's diamonds.

Trick 2.—B returns the supporting spade, which A finesses.

Trick 3.—Y, being a long-suit player, proceeds to establish the diamond suit by leading one of the second and third-best. Z wins this trick in order to lead trumps, as he knows diamonds must be Y's suit and he has four good trumps and a card of re-entry in clubs.

Trick 6.—Y leads a small club as the best chance to get his partner into the lead again to continue the trumps. Being a long-suit player, Z does not finesse the club jack.

Trick 7.—Z cannot risk the continuation of the trumps, but prefers to force with the diamond suit.

Trick 8.—A draws one of Z's trumps, and forces the other with the established spade suit.

The rest of the hand plays itself. The result is a distinct gain of three tricks, which are made in the face of the best defensive play possible for Y-Z. A very little carelessness on the part of the long-suit players would have lost them three more tricks, making the gain of the short-suit play six tricks instead of three. For instance: On the original A might have

played the king of trumps on the return of the suit, which would have made it possible for Z to draw both his trumps after one had been forced out by Y's diamonds. This would have lost two tricks. Another would have been lost if Y had not covered the diamond queen on the overplay.

I particularly wish to call the readers attention to the strengthening nature of the short-suit leads in this example. In the original, Z's short-suit lead of the diamond jack enables his partner to win two tricks in the suit; while the long-suit player with the same cards got none. In the overplay B's short-suit lead of spade jack enabled his partner to take three tricks in spades; but in the original the player who led this suit got only one. In the trump suit, the short-suit player made three tricks by not leading them; while the player who lead them got two only.

The next illustration furnishes us with another good example of hands to which the short-suit lead is clearly best adapted. In the original play, A and B are the long-suit players, and are opposed to the short-suit tactics of Y and Z. A is the original leader; and hearts are declared trumps.

Game No. 2.—Original.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	♣ 7	♣ 2	♣ J	♣ K
2	4♠	2♠	3♠	Q♠
3	7♠	J♠	9♠	6♠
4	8♠	A♠	10♠	5♠
5	2♢	5♢	3♢	Q♢
6	J♢	A♢	4♢	10♢
7	♣ 9	♣ 4	♣ Q	♣ 3
8	♣ 10	6♢	K♢	7♢
9	♡ J	9♢	8♢	♡ 7
10	♣ A	♣ 5	♡ 5	♣ 6
11	♡ K	♡ A	♡ 3	♡ 4
12	♡ 6	♡ 10	♡ Q	♡ 2
13	K♠	♡ 9	♡ 8	♣ 8

The long-suit opening makes 5 tricks.

Trick 1.—A has two four-card suits, and selects the stronger for his original lead.

Trick 2.—Z cannot well return the adversaries' suit,

so he selects the weaker of his three-card suits, and leads the supporting queen. In this case, the cards that accompany the king in A's hand are not strong enough to warrant him in covering. If B does not hold the ace, he may trump the second round, or Y may be compelled to play the ace if Z cannot continue with another supporting card.

Trick 4.—The spade 5 is marked in Z's hand, and the 10 in B's; for if A had held the 10 with the king he would have covered the queen on the first trick. (See game No. 1.) So Y knows spades will go round again, and he makes his ace before B gets a chance to discard.

Trick 5.—Y has no good short-suit lead.

Trick 7.—Y is forced to the club suit as the lesser of two evils.

Trick 9.—Z's trumps are of no value, except to force higher trumps from A.

We come now to the overplay of the same hand; but the leader A, and his partner B, are short-suit players, while their adversaries, Y and Z believe in the long-suit game.

Game No. 2.—Overplayed.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	J ♢	A ♢	3 ♢	7 ♢
2	K ♠	2 ♠	9 ♠	Q ♠
3	2 ♢	5 ♢	K ♢	10 ♢
4	♣ 7	♣ 2	♣ Q	♣ 3
5	♣ 9	♣ 4	♣ J	♣ 6
6	♡ 6	6 ♢	4 ♢	Q ♢
7	♣ A	♣ 5	3 ♠	♣ 8
8	♣ 10	♡ 9	♡ Q	♣ K
9	♡ J	9 ♢	8 ♢	5 ♠
10	4 ♠	J ♠	10 ♠	6 ♠
11	♡ K	♡ A	♡ 3	♡ 2
12	7 ♠	♡ 10	♡ 5	♡ 4
13	8 ♠	A ♠	♡ 8	♡ 7

The short-suit opening makes 9 tricks.

Trick 1.—Neither of A's long suits fulfil the first condition given in our rules for leading from four-card suits; but he has a good short-suit lead in the dia-

mond jack. Knowing it is a short-suit lead, B does not unblock.

Trick 2.—Having no long suit, and the trump lead being out of the question, Y leads his strongest three-card suit, in preference to returning the adversaries' lead, which may be a singleton, for ought he knows.

Trick 4.—B could force his partner at this stage; but that would compel A to lead B's short and weak suit. It is much better for B to lead this suit himself, as it contains good supporting cards. The cards accompanying Z's king are too small to justify him in covering.

Trick 6.—By forcing his partner, B can now get him into the lead to make the winning club.

Trick 8.—The discard of the spade 3 shows A that B must have played in from 10, 9, or J, 10, 9, and that he must still have another spade; so A cannot force him in that suit.

Trick 9.—Z's trumps are of no use to force A up, because A has already trumped with the 6, and can have nothing smaller.

The four tricks gained on this hand are entirely due to the superiority of the short-suit tactics; for it must be admitted that Y and Z made the best defense compatible with the principles of the long-suit game.

It may be remarked that some rash players would advise Y to play the trump ace at trick 8, and then to

lead trumps, in the hope of stopping the ruff. But the ruff cannot be stopped, and Y-Z would lose two tricks if they attempted it, for B would discard the spade 10. Then A would win the trump lead with the jack, and lead a spade for B to ruff. The return force in diamonds would save A's trump king, and B's queen would win.

The two foregoing hands illustrate the value of the short-suit, or strengthening-card lead. The next is an example of the advantage of not leading from tenace suits, and incidentally shows the value of the rule already given for the fourth hand: "When as fourth player you win a trick in a suit in which you have no honor, you should at once return the lead." The game also furnishes a good example of intelligent trump-leading from three only, the fall of the cards having established several cards in the plain suits.

In the original, A and B are long-suit players, while their adversaries, Y and Z are short-suiters. As before, A has the original lead, and hearts are declared trumps.

Game No. 3.—Original.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	A♠	2♠	3♠	8♠
2	5♠	6♠	9♠	J♠
3	J♢	A♢	4♢	10♢
4	♣ 4	♣ 10	♣ J	♣ Q
5	♣ 6	♣ 5	♣ 2	♣ A
6	4♠	♣ 7	7♠	K♠
7	♣ 8	♡ 4	♣ K	♣ 3
8	3♢	2♢	Q♢	5♢
9	♡ 10	♡ J	♡ 2	♡ 6
10	10♠	7♢	K♢	6♢
11	Q♠	9♢	8♢	♡ 9
12	♡ 3	♡ 5	♡ K	♡ Q
13	♡ 7	♡ A	♡ 8	♣ 9

The long-suit opening makes 4 tricks.

Trick 1.—A follows the usual long-suit system of leading ace and then fourth-best, entirely disregarding the value of the double major tenace.

Trick 3.—Z, being a short-suit player, wants his

club tenace led up to, and also wishes to retain the command of the adverse suit; so he leads the top of his short-suit, the diamond 10. With only one card smaller than the jack, A covers.

Trick 4.—Y returns the supporting club, which B covers, to prevent Z from finessing the 10.

Trick 5.—Z knows both king and queen of diamonds are against him, so his best play is to make his club ace and then to give his partner a discard by leading the spade king.

Trick 8.—Y is now forced to lead the diamond; and hopes to establish the 9.

Trick 9.—With the major tenace in diamonds in his own hand, and the two best spades marked in his partner's hand, B's best chance is to lead the trump.

Trick 10.—Being a good tenace player, Y sees that he must throw the lead into B's hand again. If A had any means of knowing that his partner had the king, and not the queen of trumps, he might have played a grand coup by trumping this trick, and leading the trump through Y.

Trick 11.—Whether B leads the diamond in the hope that his partner can win the trick by trumping, which will give him a lead through the ace, or leads the trump, makes no difference. If Z does not trump this trick, A will make a small trump, and B will still save his king.

Let us now examine the overplay, in which A and B are short-suit players, and their adversaries, Y and Z, play the long-suit game.

Game No. 3.—Overplayed.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	J ♢	A ♢	4 ♢	5 ♢
2	♡ 3	♡ 4	♡ 2	♡ Q
3	♡ 10	♡ A	♡ 8	♡ 9
4	♡ 7	♡ 5	♡ K	♡ 6
5	Q ♠	2 ♠	9 ♠	J ♠
6	3 ♢	2 ♢	Q ♢	6 ♢
7	10 ♠	6 ♠	7 ♠	8 ♠
8	A ♠	♡ J	3 ♠	K ♠
9	♣ 4	♣ 10	♣ J	♣ Q
10	♣ 6	♣ 5	♣ 2	♣ A
11	♣ 8	♣ 7	♣ K	♣ 9
12	4 ♠	7 ♢	K ♢	10 ♢
13	5 ♠	9 ♢	8 ♢	♣ 3

The short-suit opening makes six tricks.

Trick 1.—Although A has three honors in his five-card suit, he does not lead it, because the cards form the double major tenace, and he has a good short-suit lead with the diamond jack.

Trick 2.—Y's only four-card suit is the trump, and he follows the logic of the long-suit game by leading it, trusting that his partner has something in the plain suits. In this he is not far wrong, for his partner is pretty strong in everything but diamonds. But for the fact that Y knows A is a short-suit player, and that the diamond jack is not likely to have been led from K Q J and others, the trump lead would be very rash.

Trick 3.—A's 10 is of no use except to prevent a possible finesse by Y.

Trick 5.—With the command in diamonds, and minor tenace in clubs, B leads a supporting card in spades, which is the only suit that his partner can possibly have anything in. Z covers, to be sure that A shall be forced into the lead again.

Trick 6.—A, still having major tenace in spades, A 10, over the K 8, leads the diamond again.

Trick 7.—B, holding the vice tenace in diamonds, returns the spade suit.

Trick 9.—Y leads the only suit his partner can have, and Z makes what tricks he can, continuing the suit to put B in with the king, so as to keep A out of the lead with his established spades.

THE BATH COUP.

There is a very pretty bit of strategy, which has been known for a hundred and fifty years as the "Bath Coup," that offers itself when a player holds the vice tenace, A J +, and a king is led, presumably from K Q +. The natural tendency is to take the king at once with the ace, but I think this is a mistake.

As a rule it may be assumed that when your adversary has both king and queen of a suit, one of them is sure to make a trick, and if you play your ace at once, you clear the suit, and leave him in command with the queen. It is possible, but improbable, that your partner has only one of the suit, and could ruff the queen; and it is not unlikely that the adversaries may lead trumps as soon as they find the suit established, and so draw your partner's trumps before he gets a chance to ruff.

Let us suppose you pass the king, retaining command of the adverse suit, and also holding tenace over the queen. The adversaries will often be misled by the king winning; and a trump lead will follow immediately, or the original leader will continue with a small card. In the first case he is leading trumps for a suit in which you must win the next two tricks; in the second case he is playing your game.

As you will probably lose your ace if the third hand is short in the suit, this coup is not usually recommended unless you are strong in trumps ; but I always practice it, regardless of trump strength or of being second or fourth hand.

The reader must be governed by circumstances in making this coup. If the adversaries are not likely to be deceived by your holding up the ace, do not attempt it unless strong in trumps, for you may lose a trick, and can only gain the one resulting from the tenace. But if you think the enemy are likely to be misled by the coup you should adopt it by all means; for under the most unfavorable circumstances you lose only one trick, while you may gain three or four if the leader wrecks his hand by leading trumps under the impression that his suit is established.

The following game is an illustration of the advantage that may sometimes arise from the Bath Coup if the original leader falls into the error just spoken of, and leads trumps to support a suit which is supposed to be established.

The original leader, A, is a long-suit player, while his right hand adversary is a short-suit player, who believes in the Bath Coup.

Game No. 4.—Original.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	K ♠	2 ♠	3 ♠	6 ♠
2	♡ 3	♡ 4	♡ J	♡ K
3	A ◇	4 ◇	5 ◇	Q ◇
4	♡ A	♡ 8	♡ 7	♡ 2
5	♡ 5	♡ Q	♡ 9	♡ 6
6	6 ◇	K ◇	8 ◇	2 ◇
7	♡ 10	J ◇	9 ◇	3 ◇
8	7 ♠	9 ♠	10 ♠	J ♠
9	♣ 5	♣ Q	♣ A	♣ 6
10	♣ J	♣ 3	♣ 2	♣ K
11	5 ♠	♣ 4	♣ 7	♣ 10
12	8 ♠	7 ◇	♣ 8	♣ 9
13	Q ♠	10 ◇	4 ♠	A ♠

The Bath Coup makes 8 tricks for Y-Z.

Trick 1.—The fall of the cards leads A to place the ace of his suit with B, and having a card of re-entry and four trumps, he leads the trumps.

Trick 3.—Z leads from a short suit, the strengthening queen. A plays ace to continue the trumps.

Trick 8.—A naturally thinks his spade suit is good for four of the remaining tricks, and leads his original fourth-best to his partner's supposed ace.

Trick 10.—Knowing the spade ace is held up, B's best chance is to lead back the club. As Z can count A for three spades, he cannot finesse.

We come now to the overplay of the same hand, Z not playing the Bath Coup, and not leading a strengthening card when he gets in.

Game No. 4.—Overplayed.

TRICK.	A	Y	B	Z
1	K♠	2♠	3♠	A♠
2	♣ 5	♣ Q	♣ A	♣ 6
3	Q♠	9♠	10♠	J♠
4	♡ A	♡ 4	♡ 7	♡ 2
5	♡ 3	♡ 8	♡ J	♡ K
6	♣ J	♣ 3	♣ 2	♣ K
7	♡ 5	♣ 4	♣ 7	♣ 10
8	♡ 10	♡ Q	♡ 9	♡ 6
9	A♢	10♢	5♢	2♢
10	8♠	4♢	4♠	6♠
11	7♠	7♢	♣ 8	3♢
12	5♠	J♢	8♢	Q♢
13	6♢	K♢	9♢	♣ 9

Neglecting the Bath Coup makes 5 tricks for Y-Z.

Trick 1.—Although A is a short-suit player, he finds his hand comes under the second of our rules for leading from long suits. He has a suit of five cards

with two honors, a card of re-entry in another suit, and four good trumps. Z, being a long-suit player, does not believe in the Bath Coup, and plays on the long-suit theory that the suit must go round three times for the ace and jack to win two tricks in it; and that one is just as likely to win the third round with the jack by playing the ace at once.

Trick 2.—Z leads the fourth-best card of his long suit, instead of the strengthening queen.

Trick 3.—B's partner having initiated the long-suit game, B would lead trumps if he had any strength in them; but with his weak hand he considers it best to give his partner a finesse in his original lead. Z covers, hoping to make the possible 9 good in his partner's hand.

Trick 4.—A makes sure of two rounds of trumps.

Trick 6.—Z naturally goes on with his clubs.

Trick 8.—A can place the best trump with Y, and knows that he has only one club, if any, and that all the rest of his hand must be diamonds. If Y has a club, A can discard the diamond 6 on it, and then, no matter what is led, A will win all the rest of the tricks.

Illustrative games in diagram are very popular with most writers on whist, and their works usually contain numbers of them. Most of these are really nothing but problems in double-dummy, for the author makes the players perform the most astounding feats

of inference and calculation, for which inspiration would be a better name. This is comparatively easy when the player has all four hands before him; but in the games I have reproduced I have endeavored to represent as nearly as possible the play of four players of good ordinary ability. While I could go on with such examples indefinitely, I think these contain enough examples of tenace and short-suit play to put the student on the right track. Once properly started, he will profit more from actual practice than from any study of diagrams.

THE OPPONENT OF THE SHORT-SUIT PLAYER.

So far we have treated the short-suit game chiefly from the stand-point of the short-suit player, giving no consideration to the attitude of the opponents. If four short-suit players sit down to the same table, it becomes a game in which Greek meets Greek, and the winning side must be the one with the best Greeks;—those possessing greater skill at the game, superior ability to draw correct inferences from the fall of the cards, and to make use of the information thus obtained.

It may happen that while paired with a long-suit player, and adapting your game to his, you discover that your opponents are short-suit players; or you may find at least one of them adopting the short-suit leads. In either case it immediately becomes important that you should know what defensive tactics you can resort to in order to nullify any advantage that such adversaries are likely to gain from their short-suit play.

The highest card of the leader's weakest suit is led to "strengthen" his partner's hand, by permittiug the latter to pass it, retaining his high cards in that suit, while the fourth player may have to play a disproportionately high card in order to win the trick. It obviously follows that if the leader's partner cannot pass

the card led, but is compelled to play his highest card, his hand is weakened instead of strengthened. To bring this about the second hand should follow this rule :—

If your right hand opponent makes a short-suit lead, cover his card if you can.

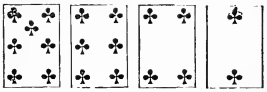
In the notes accompanying illustrative game No. 1, attention was called to the fact that if Y had not covered the diamond queen led by A, A-B would have gained another trick, for the queen would have won, and A would have led through the king again.

Some discrimination is necessary in covering the lead, if the card led and the one with which you can cover are both small, it may be better for you to pass. For instance: If you hold the 10 and three others you would probably gain nothing by covering a 9 led; while by waiting there is a possibility of winning a trick with your 10.

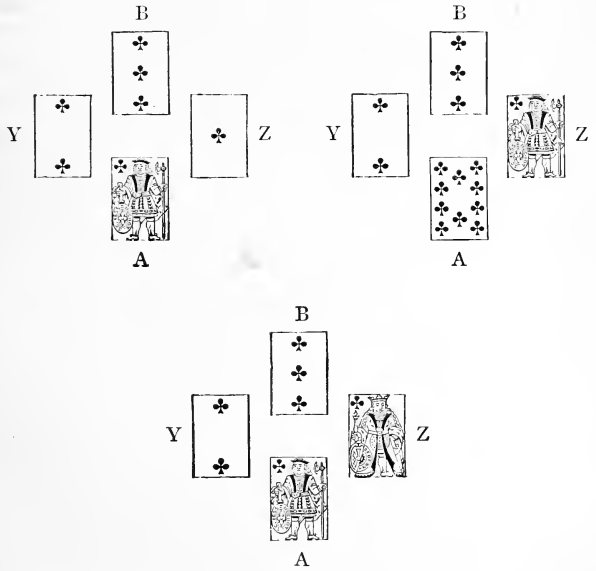
If your right-hand adversary leads a short suit, it may be well for you to return the suit when you get into the lead.

This is simply an application of the old principle of leading up to the weak hand; and if both your adversaries lead from short suits, you and your partner can attend to the enemy on each other's right. In deciding on returning such a suit, you must be guided by the cards in your own hand, and by your partner's play on the first round. If your partner's play shows that he cannot hold any card higher than the strength-

ening card originally led, the return of the suit would be risky, unless you could underplay your left-hand adversary, with a card which you think he would not cover.

Suppose you are Y and hold 

Let us further suppose the cards to the first trick to fall in any of the three following ways :—



In the first instance you cannot tell whether A has

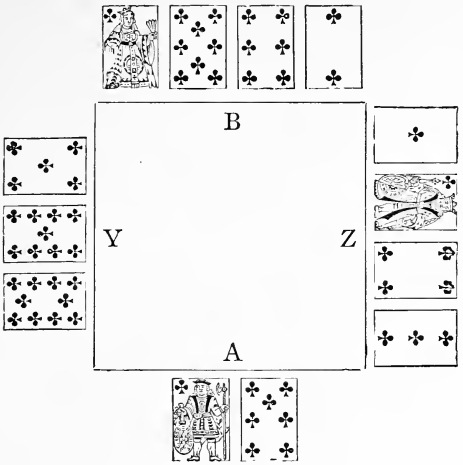
led from a short suit or not; but you know that both K and Q are against you, because your partner had to play the ace to win the jack. It would be folly to return such a suit.

In the second instance the fall of the jack marks the 10 as led from a short suit. When you get into the lead, if you do not want to lead trumps, and have no good suit of your own, it may be very advantageous to return A's lead, for your partner may have higher cards than the jack.

In the third instance, your partner's king shows that the jack was a short-suit lead. You know A to be weak, and if you have no better play the suit may be returned, as it is not improbable that your partner has the ace.

It must be borne in mind in returning the lead of a short-suit opponent that his suit is probably one of two cards only, and that you cannot risk leading it to him more than once. If two rounds of the suit have been played before you get in, it will not be safe to lead it a third time, for that would be giving the original leader the very opportunity he wants,—to ruff the suit.

After trumps are out, the short-suit lead of your right hand adversary may be returned with impunity, especially if you have no established suit of your own, or cannot lead your partner his. In returning such suits always play your highest card, so as to give your partner the finesse against the original leader, and to keep any medium high card on your left hemmed in. For instance:—



A leads the jack originally, you are Y, and your partner wins with the king. The trumps come out, and you find yourself in the lead. You know the original lead was from a weak suit, and although you cannot locate the ace with certainty, your best play is the 10 if you are going to return this suit. As the cards lie in the diagram, this will hem in the queen, and give your partner a certain finesse.

Beyond advising covering the lead if possible, and returning it with discretion, specific directions for thwarting short-suit tactics cannot well be given, which would seem an additional argument in favor of that style of play. When all four are short-suit players, the contest becomes one of skill alone.

SUGGESTIONS.

Taken as a whole, the main object of this work is directly opposed to the generally accepted and orthodox method of playing whist; but in all minor points I have endeavored, as far as possible, to adhere to conventional rules.

In this chapter, however, I wish to offer a few arguments in favor of a departure from some of the conventional leads. Since whist players are so stubbornly conservative, I have ventured to class them as "suggestions" only, although I think they will be found worthy of consideration. The reader must decide for himself whether or not to adopt them.

King, Queen and Others.

In our chapter on the short-suit game, I called attention to the advantage of having such combinations as K J 10 x, and K Q x x led up to, instead of led from. But even though you are a convert to my ideas, it may happen that you cannot avoid leading from one of these. In such cases I should advise a departure from the conventional lead, and would begin with the small card.

Suppose you hold

The lead of the king forces the ace and leaves you in command with the queen; but the queen is the only trick you will get in the suit, for the deuce and trey are utterly valueless. On the contrary, if you begin with the deuce, and partner has the jack, fourth hand the ace, your king and queen are established in one round. So if second hand holds the jack, partner the 10 and fourth hand the ace. Even if partner has no strength in the suit and the first trick goes to the 9, 10, or jack, you can play the trey on the ace if it is led, and still remain with two established cards, which may be worth leading trumps to defend. Altogether it seems to me that there is a greater probability of gain than of loss by leading the small card.

The same is true of the lead of a small card from K J 10 x, and it is now led from this combination by a great many of our best players.

I come now to a very different matter, as Mr. Kipling would say: "another story." I introduce it here among my suggestions, because it is radical in its nature; but I am sufficiently convinced of its soundness to have wished to give it a place among the conventional leads. This is the imperative leading of a singleton trump when you have at least three cards of each plain suit.

One Trump.

The modern books tell us that there is only one singleton lead admissible, and that is the trump ace. From this dictum I have already ventured to differ in

the chapter on the short-suit game. I stated that with a tenace, or second best only once guarded in each of the plain suits, a singleton trump might be used to throw the lead, as readily as any other card. I fail to see how any one can gainsay that it is to your advantage to have trumps out if you hold more than average strength in each of the plain suits. In such a case the lead of a trump singleton must be for the benefit of your hand. Without tenaces of more than average strength, but with at least three cards in each of the plain suits, I would still advise the lead of the singleton trump. There is no possible chance to use your one trump for ruffing, therefore it is useless except for leading. If your partner wins the first round, or gets into the lead later on, he will draw two trumps for one, which is universally acknowledged to be a most effective play. It will often happen that you will anticipate a trump call from your partner, and your lead will then be mutually beneficial.

These favorable considerations may be offset by the objection that your partner may have only one or two small trumps, and a short suit which he could have ruffed. Such a condition must leave ten trumps between your opponents, and they will lead them the moment they get in.

If you have a strong suit which is also your longest, but have no card of re-entry, it may be well to show your suit before leading the singleton trump, especially if you can do so with a winning card. The following are examples of hands in which it is not necessary to

show the suit at all, and from which the singleton trump should be lead at once :

♡ 6; ♠ A, 10, 8, 7, 4; ◇ Q, J, 10, 6; ♣ J, 10, 5.

♡ Q; ♠ J, 8, 6; ◇ K, J, 7, 5; ♣ 10, 8, 7, 6, 5.

♡ 5; ♠ K, 9, 6, 5; ◇ A, 9, 4, 2; ♣ K, Q, 6, 2.

But with a hand in which there is a short suit, and any chance for a ruff on the third round, the lead of the singleton trump would not be advisable. Such a hand is the following:

♡ 10; ♠ Q, 9; ◇ K, J, 9, 3, 2; ♣ A, 10, 9, 7, 2.

The spade queen is the best lead from this hand.

An exception to the lead of a singleton trump should be made when it is a king, which stands a better chance of winning a trick when it is not led. So the rule may be formulated thus :

Holding three cards in each plain suit, and any singleton trump other than the king, lead the trump.

CONCLUSION.

I believe the preceding pages contain the first systematic effort at placing before the whist-playing public a text book on the short-suit game containing an amplification of the principles of that style of play. Many works exist that treat the long-suit game almost exhaustively, but this is an attempt to outline the short-suit game in as brief and simple a manner as possible.

The long-suit game is admirably adapted to a fine hand; but such hands are sadly in the minority. The short-suit game provides for the great majority of hands, which are only moderately strong, or woefully weak; and the gist of this provision is expressed in our golden precept; "Every card, individually, is more valuable when led up to than when led."

By "individually" is meant not joined with others in sufficient numbers to form a combination from which one may be led with advantage. When you have no such combination, it is always more to your advantage to play fourth hand, or even third or second, than to lead in that suit.

As you cannot avoid leading altogether, your resource must be to lead from suits which promise the least loss of value by being led away from; that is to say, your numerically and intrinsically weak suits.

Having selected your weakest suit for the sacrifice, your next consideration is to select the card that is most likely to assist your partner, and that is your highest. It then becomes your partner's duty to finesse with depth and discretion, retaining and promoting his own high cards in the suit. When he in turn sacrifices a suit to you, you must follow the same course, and finesse the card led if you can.

Both should preserve tenaces as far as possible, and keep a bright lookout for opportunities to cross-ruff.

If partner's weak suit is led through you, you must protect it if you can, and your partner will similarly protect your weak suits.

In these few paragraphs you have a concise epitome of the short-suit game, the especial function of which may be said to be the making the most of ordinary hands, which will include at least three-fourths of all that are dealt at whist.

It is not absolutely essential to your adoption of the short-suit game that your partner should be familiar with it. You need only warn him not to return your lead unless convinced that you have led from strength. You can still preserve your tenaces and lead strengthening cards or short suits with an eye to cross-ruffing, instead of striving after impossibilities, and playing into your opponent's hands by endeavoring to establish four-card suits headed by 8's or 10's.

The writer for a long time refrained from adopting the short-suit game himself, although convinced of its superiority in most cases, and thoroughly familiar with

it in theory, simply because he could find no partner to play it with him. Finally it occured to him always before beginning a game, to ask his partner not to return his lead unless some positive indication was given that it was from a long suit. As a result he won the next thirteen games, and after losing the fourteenth, twelve more before losing another. Before that he had considered the winning of three successive games quite a triumph.

If you have a partner with whom you are frequently paired, and who will join you in studying this little work, so much the better for you both. If not so fortunate, follow the plan I have recommended, and "go it alone." If your partner can only be depended on not to return your weak leads, you will be rewarded by an immediate and marked improvement in your record.

You will find many persons who believe in playing by machinery, and in the utter exclusion of all innovations, and such will tell you that this is all nonsense. Console yourself with the thought that many persons told Galileo and Columbus that they were talking nonsense. If your object is to win, put this system to the test; I am perfectly willing to abide by the issue.

It is the sincere wish of the author that his readers may accumulate proof of the soundness of this little treatise on the Short-Suit Game by winning, and he trusts they will enjoy both the game and the gains.

The Laws of Whist.

As Revised and Adopted at the Third American Whist Congress, Chicago, June 20–24, 1893.

THE GAME.

I. A game consists of seven points, each trick above six counting one. The value of the game is determined by deducting the losers' score from seven.

FORMING THE TABLE.

II. Those first in the room have the preference. If, by reason of two or more arriving at the same time, more than four assemble, the preference among the last comers is determined by cutting, a lower cut giving the preference over all cutting higher. A complete table consists of six; the four having the preference play. Partners are determined by cutting; the highest two play against the lowest two; the lowest deals, and has the choice of seats and cards.

III. If two players cut intermediate cards of equal value, they cut again; the lower of the new cut plays with the original lowest.

IV. If three players cut cards of equal value, they cut again. If the fourth has cut the highest card, the lowest two of the new cut are partners, and the lowest deals. If the fourth has cut the lowest card, he deals, and the highest two of the new cut are partners.

V. At the end of a game, if there are more than four belonging to the table, a sufficient number of the players retire to admit those awaiting their turn to play. In determining which players remain in, those who have played a less number of consecutive games have the preference over all who have played a greater number; between two or more who have

played an equal number, the preference is determined by cutting, a lower cut giving the preference over all cutting higher.

VI. To entitle one to enter a table, he must declare his intention to do so before any one of the players has cut for the purpose of commencing a new game or of cutting out.

CUTTING.

VII. In cutting, the ace is the lowest card. All must cut from the same pack. If a player exposes more than one card, he must cut again. Drawing cards from the outspread pack may be resorted to in place of cutting.

SHUFFLING.

VIII. Before every deal, the cards must be shuffled. When two packs are used, the dealer's partner must collect and shuffle the cards for the ensuing deal and place them at his right hand. In all cases the dealer may shuffle last.

IX. A pack must not be shuffled during the play of a hand, nor so as to expose the face of any card.

CUTTING TO THE DEALER.

X. The dealer must present the pack to his right-hand adversary to be cut; the adversary must take a portion from the top of the pack, and place it towards the dealer; at least four cards must be left in each packet; the dealer must reunite the packets by placing the one not removed in cutting upon the other.

XI. If, in cutting or in reuniting the separate packs, a card is exposed, the pack must be reshuffled by the dealer and cut again; if there is any confusion of the cards, or doubt as to the place where the pack was separated, there must be a new cut.

XII. If the dealer reshuffles the pack after it has been properly cut, he loses his deal.

DEALING.

XIII. When the pack has been properly cut and reunited, the dealer must distribute the cards, one at a time, to each player in regular rotation, beginning at his left. The last, which is the trump card, must be turned up before the dealer.

At the end of the hand, or when the deal is lost, the deal passes to the player next to the dealer on his left, and so on to each in turn.

XIV. There must be a new deal by the same dealer:—

I. If any card except the last is faced in the pack.

II. If, during the deal or during the play of the hand, the pack is proved incorrect or imperfect; but any prior score made with that pack shall stand.

XV. If, during the deal, a card is exposed, the side not in fault may demand a new deal, provided neither of that side has touched a card. If a new deal does not take place, the exposed card is not liable to be called.

XVI. Any one dealing out of turn or with his adversaries' pack, may be stopped before the trump card is turned, after which, the deal is valid, and the packs, if changed, so remain.

MISDEALING.

XVII. It is a misdeal:—

I. If the dealer omits to have the pack cut, and his adversaries discover the error before the trump card is turned, and before looking at any of their cards.

II. If he deals a card incorrectly, and fails to correct the error before dealing another.

III. If he counts the cards on the table or in the remainder of the pack.

IV. If, having a perfect pack, he does not deal to each player the proper number of cards, and the error is discovered before all have played to the first trick.

V. If he looks at the trump card before the deal is completed.

VI. If he places the trump card face downwards upon his own or any other player's cards.

A misdeal loses the deal, unless, during the deal, either of the adversaries touches a card, or in any other manner interrupts the dealer.

THE TRUMP CARD.

XVIII. The dealer must leave the trump card face upwards

on the table until it is his turn to play to the first trick; if it is left on the table until after the second trick has been turned and quitted, it is liable to be called. After it has been lawfully taken up, it must not be named, and any player naming it is liable to have his highest or his lowest trump called by either adversary. A player may, however, ask what the trump suit is.

IRREGULARITIES IN THE HANDS.

XIX. If, at any time after all have played to the first trick, the pack being perfect, a player is found to have either more or less than his correct number of cards, and his adversaries have their right number, the latter, upon the discovery of such surplus or deficiency, may consult and shall have the choice:—

I. To have a new deal; or,

II. To have the hand played out; in which case the surplus or missing card or cards are not taken into account.

If either of the adversaries also has more or less than his correct number, there must be a new deal.

If any player has a surplus card by reason of an omission to play to a trick, his adversaries can exercise the foregoing privilege only after he has played to the trick following the one in which such omission occurred.

CARDS LIABLE TO BE CALLED.

XX. The following cards are liable to be called by either adversary:

I. Every card faced upon the table otherwise than in the regular course of play, but not including a card led out of turn.

II. Every card thrown with the one led or played to the current trick. The player must indicate the one led or played.

III. Every card so held by a player that his partner sees any portion of its face.

IV. All the cards in a hand lowered or shown by a player so that his partner sees more than one card of it.

V. Every card named by the player holding it.

XXI. All cards liable to be called must be placed, and left face upward, on the table. A player must lead or play them

when they are called, provided he can do so without revoking. The call may be repeated at each trick until the card is played, A player cannot be prevented from leading or playing a card liable to be called; if he can get rid of it in the course of play, no penalty remains.

XXII. If a player leads a card better than any of his adversaries hold of the suit, and then leads one or more other cards without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may he called upon by either adversary to take the first trick, and the other cards thus improperly played are liable to be called; it makes no difference whether he plays them one after the other, or throws them all on the table together, after the first card is played, the others are liable to be called.

XXIII. A player having a card liable to be called must not play another until the adversaries have stated whether or not they wish to call the card liable to the penalty. If he plays another card without awaiting the decision of the adversaries, such other card also is liable to be called.

LEADING OUT OF TURN.

XXIV. If any player leads out of turn, a suit may be called from him or his partner, the first time it is the turn of either of them to lead. The penalty can be enforced only by the adversary on the right of the player from whom a suit can lawfully be called.

If a player, so called on to lead a suit, has none of it, or if all have played to the false lead, no penalty can be enforced. If all have not played to the trick, the cards erroneously played to such false lead are not liable to be called, and must be taken back.

PLAYING OUT OF TURN.

XXV. If the third hand plays before the second, the fourth hand also may play before the second.

XXVI. If the third hand has not played and the fourth hand plays before the second, the latter may be called upon by the third hand to play his highest or lowest card of the suit led, or if he has none, to trump or not to trump the trick.

XXVII. If all four players throw their cards on the table, face upwards, no further play of that hand is permitted. The result of the hand, as then claimed or admitted, is established, provided that if a revoke is discovered, the revoke penalty attaches.

REVOKING.

XXVIII. A revoke is a renounce in error, not corrected in time. A player renounces in error, when, holding one or more cards of the suit led, he plays a card of a different suit.

A renounce in error may be corrected by the player making it, before the trick in which it occurs has been turned and quitted, unless either he or his partner, whether in his right turn or otherwise, has led or played to the following trick, or unless his partner has asked whether or not he has any of the suit renounced.

XXIX. If a player corrects his mistake in time to save a revoke, the card improperly played by him is liable to be called; any player or players, who have played after him, may withdraw their cards and substitute others; the cards so withdrawn are not liable to be called.

XXX. The penalty for revoking is the transfer of two tricks from the revoking side to their adversaries; it can be enforced for as many revokes as occur during the hand. The revoking side cannot win the game in that hand; if both sides revoke, neither can win the game in that hand.

XXXI. The revoking player and his partner may require the hand in which the revoke has been made, to be played out, and may score all points made by them up to the score of six.

XXXII. At the end of a hand, the claimants of a revoke may search all the tricks. If the cards have been mixed, the claim may be urged and proved if possible; but no proof is necessary and the revoke is established, if, after it has been claimed, the accused player or his partner mixes the cards before they have been examined to the satisfaction of the adversaries.

XXXIII. The revoke may be claimed at any time before the cards have been presented and cut for the following deal, but not thereafter.

MISCELLANEOUS.

XXXIV. Any one, during the play of a trick and before the cards have been touched for the purpose of gathering them together, may demand that the players draw their cards.

XXXV. If any one, prior to his partner playing, calls attention in any manner to the trick or to the score, the adversary last to play to the trick may require the offender's partner to play his highest or lowest of the suit led, or, if he has none, to trump or not to trump the trick.

XXXVI. If any player says, "I can win the rest," "The rest are ours," "We have the game," or words to that effect, his partner's cards must be laid upon the table, and are liable to be called.

XXXVII. When a trick has been turned and quitted, it must not again be seen until after the hand has been played. A violation of this law subjects the offender's side to the same penalty as in the case of a lead out of turn.

XXXVIII. If a player is lawfully called upon to play the highest or lowest of a suit, or to trump or not to trump a trick, or to lead a suit, and unnecessarily fails to comply, he is liable to the same penalty as if he had revoked.

XXXIX. In all cases where a penalty has been incurred, the offender must await the decision of the adversaries. If either of them, with or without his partner's consent, demands a penalty, to which they are entitled, such decision is final. If the wrong adversary demands a penalty, or a wrong penalty is demanded, none can be enforced.

Laws for Duplicate Whist.

Duplicate Whist is governed by the laws of whist, except in so far as they are modified by the following special laws:

THE GAME AND THE SCORE.

LAW A. A game or match consists of any agreed number of deals, each of which is played once only by each player.

The contesting teams must be of the same number, but may each consist of any agreed number of pairs, one-half of which, or as near thereto as possible, sit north and south, the other half east and west.

Every trick taken is scored, and the match is determined by a comparison of the aggregate scores won by the competing teams. In case the teams consist of an odd number of pairs, each team, in making up such aggregate, adds, as though won by it, the average score of all the pairs seated in the positions opposite to its odd pair.

Each side keeps its own score, and it is the duty of the north and south players at each table to compare the scores there made, and see that they correspond. In case they fail to perform this duty, the east and west scores are taken as correct, and the north and south scores made to correspond thereto.

In a match between two teams, the team which wins a majority of all the tricks scores the match as won by the number of tricks which it has taken in excess of one-half the total.

In a match between more than two teams, each team wins or loses, as the case may be, by the number of tricks which its aggregate score exceeds or falls short of the average score of all the competing teams.

In taking averages, fractions are disregarded, and the nearest whole number taken, one-half counting as a whole, unless it is necessary to take the fraction into account to avoid a tie, in which case the match is scored as won, by the fraction of a trick.

FORMING THE TABLE.

LAW B. Tables may be formed by cutting, or by agreement.

In two-table duplicate, if the tables are formed by cutting, the four having the preference play at one table, and the next four at the other. The highest two at one table are partners with the lowest two at the other. The highest two at each table sit north and south; the lowest two east and west.

DEALING AND MISDEALING.

LAW C. The deal is never lost; in case of a misdeal, or of the exposure of a card during the deal, the cards must be redealt by the same player.

THE TRUMP CARD.

LAW D. The trump card must be recorded before the play begins, on a slip provided for that purpose. When the deal has been played, the slip on which the trump card has been recorded must be placed by the dealer on the top of his cards, but the trump card must not again be turned until the hands are taken up for the purpose of overplaying them, at which time it must be turned and left face upward on the table until it is the dealer's turn to play to the first trick. The slip on which the trump card is recorded must be turned face downward as soon as the trump card is taken up by the dealer.

IRREGULARITIES IN THE HANDS.

LAW E. If a player is found to have either more or less than his correct number of cards, the course to be pursued is determined by the time at which the irregularity is discovered.

I. Where the irregularity is discovered before or during the original play of a hand, there must be a new deal.

II. Where the irregularity is discovered when the hand is taken up for overplay, and before such overplay has begun, the hand in which the irregularity is so discovered must be sent back to the table from which it was last received, and the error there be rectified.

III. Where such irregularity is not discovered until after the overplay has begun:

In two-table duplicate there must be a new deal; but in a game in which the same hands are played at more than two tables, the hands must be rectified as above, and then passed to the next table, without overplay at the table at which the error was discovered, in which case, if a player had a deficiency and his adversary the corresponding surplus, each team takes the average score for that deal; if, however, the partner of the player having the deficiency had the corresponding surplus, his team is given the lowest score made at any table for that deal.

PLAYING THE CARDS.

LAW F. Each player, when it is his turn to play, must place his card face upward before him, and toward the centre of the table, and allow it to remain upon the table in this position until all have played to the trick, when he must turn it over, place it face downward, and nearer to himself, placing each successive card, as he turns it, on the top of the last card previously turned by him. After he has played his card, and also after he had turned it he must quit it by removing his hand.

A trick is turned and quitted when all four players have turned and quitted their respective cards.

The cards must be left in the order in which they were played until the scores for the deal are recorded.

CLAIMING A REVOKE.

LAW G. A revoke may be claimed at any time before the last trick of the deal in which it occurs has been turned and quitted, and the scores of that deal recorded, but not thereafter.

The Etiquette of Whist.

As Adopted by the Third American Whist Congress, Chicago, June 20-24, 1893.

The following rules belong to the established code of Whist Etiquette. They are formulated with a view to discourage and repress certain improprieties of conduct, therein pointed

out, which are not reached by the laws. The courtesy which marks the intercourse of gentlemen will regulate other more obvious cases.

I. No conversation should be indulged in during the play except such as is allowed by the laws of the game.

II. No player should in any manner whatsoever give any intimation as to the state of his hand or of the game, or of approval or disapproval of a play.

III. No player should lead until the preceding trick is turned and quitted.

IV. No player should, after having led a winning card, draw a card from his hand for another lead until his partner has played to the current trick.

V. No player should play a card in any manner so as to call particular attention to it, nor should he demand that the cards be placed in order to attract the attention of his partner.

VI. No player should purposely incur a penalty because he is willing to pay it, nor should he make a second revoke in order to conceal one previously made.

VII. No player should take advantage of information imparted by his partner through a breach of etiquette.

VIII. No player should object to referring a disputed question of fact to a bystander who professes himself uninterested in the result of the game and able to decide the question.

IX. Bystanders should not in any manner call attention to or give any information concerning the play or the state of the game, during the play of a hand. They should not look over the hand of a player without his permission; nor should they walk around the table to look at the different hands.

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